THE FUNCTION OF NOSTALGIA: ERNEST HEMINGWAY

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of Utah in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English

University of Utah
August 1964

This Thesis for the

Master of Arts Degree

by
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has been approved
(July 1964)

Ch rman, Supervisory Committee

Reader, Supervisory Co

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LIST OF ABBREVIATED TITLES

BY WHICH ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S WORKS

ARE CITED IN REFERENCES

ARIT	. . . . .	Across the River and Into the Trees
DA	. . . . .	Death in the Afternoon
FWBT	. . . . .	For Whom the Bell Tolls
GHA	. . . . .	Green Hills of Africa
MF	. . . . .	A Moveable Feast
OMS	. . . . .	The Old Man and the Sea
SS	. . . . .	The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway
SAR	. . . . .	The Sun Also Rises

INTRODUCTION

Wright Morris once made the statement: "The 'subject' of Wolfe, Hemingway, and Faulkner, however various the backgrounds, however contrasting the styles, pushed to its extremity, is nostalgia."[1] The chapters which follow are, in a sense, an examination of how valid this statement is in regard to Hemingway, but in them I have gone beyond just considerations of nostalgia as "subject" to examine how nostalgia functions as a technical device and what significance it has for an understanding of Hemingway as artist. It should be understood that I am not attempting to explain all of Hemingway in terms of nostalgia; no one critical approach can provide all of the answers to why a man writes fiction and what that fiction means. My purpose has been to concentrate on an element in Hemingway's writing which I feel is important for a thorough understanding of Hemingway and which, as far as I know, has previously received little consideration.

I have used the word "nostalgia" in my title with some reservations because the meaning of this word is rather ambiguous. In the past it simply meant homesickness, but now, according to Webster's Third International Dictionary, it means "a wistful or excessively sentimental sometimes abnormal yearning for return to or return of some real or romanticized period or irrecoverable condition or setting in the past." But even this broad definition is not completely satisfactory, probably because

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[1]"The Function of Nostalgia: F. Scott Fitzgerald" in F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Arthur Mizener (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1963) p. 25.

the feelings to which the term nostalgia is applied are themselves very difficult to describe because of their subtlety and evanescence. In the essay quoted above, Mr. Morris says:

> The power and sources of nostalgia lie beyond the scalpel. Nostalgia sings in the blood, and with age it grows thicker, and when all other things fail it joins men in a singular brotherhood. Wherever they live in the present, or hope to live in the future, it is in the past that you will truly find them. In the past one is safely out of time but not out of mind.[2]

Nostalgia is not associated with any particular era or any particular civilization or culture. It is ancient and modern, rural and urban. It is found in primitive societies as well as advanced. It is a phenomenon fundamental to the human creature. Beardsly Ruml, in an article entitled "Some Notes on Nostalgia" says:

> A recognition of the fundamental and pervasive influence of the nostalgic, under whatever names, will enable us to interpret human behavior with a new realism. This re-interpretation of human behavior will make it possible for us to rewrite the drama of sin and self and sex. . . .The understanding of interpersonal relationships also requires an appreciation of the role played by nostalgic sentiments. We need to realize that friendship, affection, love, whether between persons of the same or of different sexes, have an emotional basis that is always in part and frequently dominantly nostalgic.[3]

As I use the term "nostalgia," I will be referring primarily to a person's emotional response to memories of places and events which are, for him, associated with pleasure or satisfaction of some sort, keeping in mind that such emotional response is basic to the human psychology. Ernest Hemingway seemed to realize that an understanding of the nostalgic "will enable us to interpret human behavior with a new realism," and he did make use of his understanding of the nostalgic in his attempt to "rewrite the drama of sin and self and sex."

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[2] Ibid., p. 26.

[3] Saturday Review of Literature, June 22, 1946, p. 7.

Nostalgia is often associated with sentimentality, and sentiment seems foreign to the popular image of Hemingway and the Hemingway hero. But the Hemingway hero is not, as many people have thought, a tough, insensitive brute obsessed by an appetite for blood-sports, drink, and women. He is, on the contrary, deeply sensitive and suffers profoundly from the shocks of experience. Hemingway, himself, is not the hard-boiled "tough guy" that many would have us believe. "Instead, he is a poet with fine awareness of the manifold impressions of sight and sound and smell and taste, a poet for whom the Michigan hemlock forests of his boyhood are forever at the tips of his senses."[4] Sean O'Faolain says, "I believe that Hemingway's 'realism' is merely the carapace or shell that protects, grips, holds from overspilling a nature fundamentally emotional and tender."[5] Anyone who has read Hemingway's work carefully should be well aware that his nature is fundamentally emotional and sensitive and not without sentimentality, though he might try to conceal it.

Hemingway led an extremely active life. It was packed with shooting, big-game hunting, fishing, fighting, traveling, and about as much physical punishment in war, road and air accidents as the human body can take. He enjoyed activity and adventure and it seems natural that such enjoyment would not be confined to the time of experience, but would last in his memory so that particularly good or exciting times would be reviewed with feelings of nostalgia. Repeatedly in his writing he stressed the importance of remembering. He did not have very much to say about the future,

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[4]Michael F. Maloney, "Ernest Hemingway: The Missing Third Dimension" in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1961), p. 181.

[5]"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" in Hemingway, ed. Robert P. Weeks (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 113.

but it is obvious how important the past was to him. In the account of his interview with Hemingway, George Plimpton gives this description of Hemingway's work room:

> The room, however, for all the disorder sensed at first sight, indicates on inspection an owner who is basically neat but cannot bear to throw anything away--especially if sentimental value is attached. One bookcase top has an odd assortment of mementos: a giraffe made of wood beads, a little castiron turtle, tiny models of a locomotive, two jeeps and a Venetian gondola, a toy bear with a key in its back, a monkey carrying a pair of cymbals, a miniature guitar, and a little tin model of a U. S. Navy biplane (one wheel missing) resting awry on a circular straw mat--the quality of the collection that of the odds and ends which turn up in a shoebox at the back of a small boy's closet. It is evident, though, that these tokens have their value, just as three buffalo horns Hemingway keeps in his bedroom have a value dependent not on size but because during the acquiring of them things went badly in the bush which ultimately turned out well. 'It cheers me to look at them,' Hemingway says.[6]

The past had great meaning for Hemingway and he was strongly affected by nostalgia. In the chapters which follow, I have tried to point out the effects that his inordinate concern for the past and the nostalgic had upon his writing.

Just exactly how autobiographical Hemingway's work is we cannot tell with certainty, but it is obvious how close his fiction is to his own experiences as far as major events and locations are concerned. We can say with certainty that Hemingway, more than most authors, portrays only what he has personally felt and seen and known. His imagination is firmly anchored to his own experience. According to Carlos Baker:

> What he has personally done, or what he knows unforgettably by having gone through one version of it is what he is interested in telling about. This is not to say that he has refused to invent freely. But he has always made it a sacrosanct point to invent in terms of what he actually knows from having been there.[7]

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[6] "An Interview with Ernest Hemingway" in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, p. 21.

[7] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 48.

Of course, all authors must draw upon their own past experience, but Hemingway's tendency to restrict his material to his own experience has a special significance for this study because this tendency combined with his sensitivity to the nostalgic provides some important answers to how and why he created his art.

Hemingway's main themes are violence, sex, and death, and the question immediately arises: What could these themes possibly have to do with nostalgia? It is in regard to this question that I differ with the main stream of Hemingway criticism. It is generally believed that, for Hemingway, writing was "an exhausting ceremony of exorcism," as Malcolm Cowley puts it. Hemingway himself can be quoted to support this view. For example, Robert Jordan in For Whom the Bell Tolls says that he can get rid of an unpleasant experience "by writing about it. Once you write it down it is all gone." A number of critics have said that Hemingway wrote out his experience of being wounded as a kind of therapy which would help him get rid of emotional scars. The theory seems to be that Hemingway came out of the First World War with painful memories of which he wanted to rid himself by setting them all down. But if this theory is true, why were those memories not gone after he had written about them. Take, for example, his wounding. He did not rid himself of the memory of his wounding by writing about it; on the contrary, he wrote about it again and again and over a long period of years. I do not think he really wanted to lose such a memory--he valued it and it was an important part of his writing. He cherished the experience of his wounding with a strange kind of nostalgia.

Hemingway was always concerned with being professional--knowing the right gun and ammunition, the right fishing gear, the correct military strategy--to the ridiculous extreme of reaching for a bottle of Valpolicella

"accurately and well" in Across the River and Into the Trees. His wounding was important to him because, as he says in Death in the Afternoon, he wanted to write truly about violence and death. He valued his own wounding as he did all of his war experience because it helped to qualify him as a kind of "professional." He said that other writers in writing about death closed their eyes at the last instant.[8] He did not want to do this, and, I am sure, felt that his wounding and other war experiences qualified him to write accurately about the moment of violent death. In Green Hills of Africa he gives some indication of the way he valued his war experience. An experience of war, he asserts, is a great advantage to a writer, being

> one of the major subjects and certainly one of the hardest to write truly of and those writers who had not seen it were always very jealous and tried to make it seem unimportant, or abnormal, or a disease as a subject, while, really, it was just something quite irreplaceable that they had missed.[9]

Our bodies do not remember pain, and our psychic processes obliterate or at least attempt to obliterate, those parts of memories which are painful. This means that as we remember experiences which were very unpleasant at the time they happened, we tend to remember only the less painful parts. In this way we might become nostalgic about events that have been important to us even though there was nothing particularly pleasurable about them when they transpired. I think this is the case with Hemingway and many of his experiences. There is no doubt about the fact that Hemingway's wounding was horribly painful and was an extremely traumatic experience, but at the same time, he took a certain pride in it. He saved the

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[8] DA, pp. 2-3.

[9] GHA, pp. 47-48.

uniform he was wounded in, and when he returned to Oak Park and lectured at his high school, he held up the shrapnel-riddled trousers for the students to see.[10] This hardly seems the thing he would do if he were really so intent on "exorcising" the memory of his wounding.

The point I wish to make is that although Hemingway often drew upon experiences we might consider most unpleasant, these experiences were important to him and he valued them because they helped him to accomplish what he desired in his writing. Such experiences had nostalgic significance for him, and it is important to realize this when examining how he converted them into fiction. It is my contention, therefore, that nostalgia is at the very root of the process by which Hemingway created art from his own experience, and that nostalgia does have very much to do with his main themes of violence, sex, and death.

In addition to the way it affects Hemingway's "subject," nostalgia also functions as a technical and stylistical device in his writing. Hemingway sought permanence in art and he felt it could be achieved if the artist "is serious enough and has luck" and can get beyond a three-dimensional imitation of actuality into a "fourth or fifth dimension." There has been much speculation about what Hemingway meant by a fourth or fifth dimension and whether he himself achieved it. One of the most interesting articles dealing with these questions is one by F. I. Carpenter called "Hemingway's Fifth Dimension." Mr. Carpenter points out that often in Hemingway's work

> A brief, immediate experience, observed realistically, is described first as it occurred 'in our time'; the protagonist is intensely moved, but remains confused, so that the meaning

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[10]See Charles A. Fenton, The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), p. 70.

> of it all seems nothing or 'nada.' But this immediate experience recalls individual memories of other, similar experiences. . . .And these 'mediate' experiences are suggested by 'flashbacks,' or by conversations. . . .And these fragmentary remembrances of similar experiences, by relating the individual to other people, places and times, suggest new meanings and forms. Finally this new awareness of the patterns and meanings implicit in the immediate, individual experience intensifies it, and gives it a new 'dimension' not apparent at the time it actually happened.[11]

I am not convinced that the nostalgic flashbacks and conversations which appear so often in Hemingway's work constitute the fifth dimension in question, as Mr. Carpenter seems to suggest, but it is certain that Hemingway learned to use a peculiar overlay of the past upon the present in order to intensify character and dramatic situation. He always strove for economy, and this method of interweaving the past into the present made it possible for him to give real depth to the present condition of his characters with what appears to be simply a few casual brushstrokes. Notice for example, how much Santiago's brief recollection of his arm-wrestle with the Negro in Casablanca adds to an understanding of the old man in his present struggle with the great fish, or how important to the story the flashbacks are in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." The events portrayed in For Whom the Bell Tolls transpire during a period of just three days, and yet the characters involved are well developed. Much of this development comes from reminiscences, many of which are fleeting or appear completely unrelated to the plot. This overlay of the past upon the present is not apparent in The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms, and this is one of the main reasons that I will not devote much space to these two very important novels. In these books, Hemingway's working assumption seemed to be that character could be revealed almost exclusively through action, and the function of

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[11] In Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, p. 196.

nostalgia is not as significant as in other works which I have chosen to discuss.

Hemingway's consistent test for authenticity in an art object was the involuntary subjective response of the perceiver. In his writing, he often used nostalgia as a means of evoking this kind of response. He communicated unexpressed emotions by making the reader identify himself with the objectively-described settings and actions and reactions of his characters. Nostalgia, a basic and pervasive human emotion, became a vehicle by which he elicited the subjective response he desired from his reader. Hemingway's writing is pervaded by a strong sense of place. He had a love of landscape which is revealed in his descriptions, e.g., the Irati River country in The Sun Also Rises, the high valleys and streams of For Whom the Bell Tolls, or the game country of Tanganyika in Green Hills of Africa. Yet seldom in these descriptions do the uniquenesses of the places receive special emphasis. In discussing the description of the Irati River country, Carlos Baker says:

> One recognizes easily the generic type of the clean and orderly grove, where weeds and brush do not flourish because of the shade, and the grass gets only enough light to rise to carpet level. Undoubtedly, as in the neoclassical esthetic, the intent is to provide a generic frame within which the reader is at liberty to insert his own uniquenesses--as many or as few as his imagination may supply.[12]

Much of Hemingway's description is actually designed to utilize the reader's own nostalgic images. When Hemingway is successful in doing this, what appears to be very objective writing becomes charged with emotion and takes on a subjective significance for the reader. Hemingway's methods, however, are not always successful for all readers. Sometimes, especially in the early work, the facts given seem too many for the effect intended. For

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[12] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 51

example, in The Sun Also Rises, Jake's complete itinerary of his walk with Bill Gorton through the streets of Paris mentions, one after the other, the buildings they passed, the things they ate, and the drinks they drank.[13] For those who know Paris, this itinerary would produce the happy shock of recognition and would evoke nostalgic impressions which might give new reality to Jake and Bill and what they are doing, but for others, these facts of municipal geography, which serve no dramatic purpose, may seem excessive.

The nostalgic often functions in Hemingway's writing as a technical device for achieving realism and emotional intensity. In many cases the realism of an event or setting described derives not so much from what is described as from the fact that someone is describing and is intensely seeing through the eye of memory. Much of Hemingway's first-person narrative has a special nostalgic quality which gives a certain realism and immediacy to that which is described. The first paragraphs of A Farewell to Arms and "In Another Country" are good examples of this quality.

In the case of The Fifth Column, Hemingway's experiment with the drama, nostalgia functions as one pole in the conflict within Philip Rawlings, and it is about this conflict that the plot of the play revolves. Dorothy Bridges, whose name might have been Nostalgia, Hemingway tells us in his preface to the play, serves as a kind of objective correlative for the nostalgic emotions which Philip must slough off if he is to remain dedicated to the cause in which he is engaged. This is an example of the way Hemingway used nostalgia almost like another

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[13] SAR, pp. 77-8.

protagonist in his stories in order to create emotional conflict. This point is especially significant in regard to The Old Man and the Sea.

Nostalgia often serves, in Hemingway's writing, as the key to what a man is. It seems to constitute what we call the self, for in terms of Hemingway's naturalism a man is what he has experienced, and nostalgia seems to be the process by which the most meaningful of those experiences are selected to be actively remembered. In order for a man to be in control of himself, he must be in control of his memories. If he cannot put his memories into some kind of order, or if he is dishonest about them, his life becomes confusing and depressing. This is the problem we find so apparent in the short stories concerned with Nick Adams after the War.

From my investigation of the function of nostalgia in Hemingway, one thing is clearly evident: Ernest Hemingway knew well the power and pervasiveness of the nostalgic. As a man with a basically sensitive and emotional nature, he was personally aware of the poignancy of feelings of nostalgia. He seemed to recognize how basic and universal this emotion is, and he frequently sought to use it to achieve his artistic purposes. With characteristic self-discipline he never let it get out of his control, for he seemed to know that, uncontrolled, nostalgia could destroy the value of his work through shallow sentimentality.

CHAPTER I

THE SHORT STORIES

The short story was the means of Hemingway's entrance into serious fiction. This was a natural way for him to begin because it was suited to his esthetic aims. He was interested in projecting his reader into what he has often called "the way it was." In 1942 Hemingway said "A writer's job is to tell the truth,"[1] and it is evident that he had believed this for twenty years and would continue to believe it. Hemingway sought to tell the truth in his writing primarily by choosing to write only about those things which he knew and understood. This is why most of his subject matter is personal experience, which, however, he did not hesitate to alter to suit his esthetic purposes. The short story was the perfect means by which he could present short episodes drawn from life. Constructing these short episodes was practice in a rigorous self-discipline which made him a craftsman at converting his own experience into art. In writing his early short stories, he learned how to get the most out of each of his experiences; he learned how to use dialogue as exposition; he learned how to prune language so that not a word was wasted; he learned methods for multiplying dramatic intensity. Many years after the time when Hemingway was living in the room above the sawmill in Paris and writing short stories, he said, "Up in that room I decided that I would write one story about each thing that I knew about. I was trying to do this all the time I was writing, and it was good and severe discipline."[2]

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[1] Men at War, New York, 1942, introduction, p. xv.

[2] MF, p. 12.

Hemingway's stories may be conveniently taken as a kind of unit, since most of them were written within ten years and appeared in the following collections: In Our Time (1925), Men Without Women (1927), and Winner Take Nothing (1933). In 1938 the stories in these collections were brought together and four more were added to make a total of forty-nine. Although Hemingway published several other stories, they have not added to the 1938 list--Scribner's most recent edition of The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway still contains just forty-nine.

"It was truly the start of everything he was ever going to do." --this is how Philip Young, using a phrase from "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," refers to In Our Time, Hemingway's first important book.[3] In Our Time contains fifteen short stories and seventeen little vignettes. Eight of the stories and one of the vignettes are about a young man named Nick Adams, and several of the other stories and vignettes are obviously seen through the eyes of Nick or a young man much like him. Some of these stories taken alone do not seem to make much sense, at least this has often been the complaint of the average reader, but when these stories are taken as a whole and in relation to the other Nick Adams stories which appeared later, a kind of novel takes shape which tells of a young man's loss of innocence as he comes to maturity in a world of violence, war, and death.

The parallels between the short stories and Hemingway's biography are obvious. This is not to say that Nick Adams is simply Hemingway as a young man; the relationship of Nick Adams to Hemingway is much more complex than that. Carlos Baker has given this explanation for the fact

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[3]Ernest Hemingway (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1952), p. 2.

that in the short stories Hemingway relied so heavily on personal experience:

> His determination to write only those aspects of experience with which he was personally acquainted gave a number of the first forty-five short stories the flavor of fictionalized personal history. He was always prepared to invent people and circumstances, to choose backgrounds which would throw his people into three-dimensional relief. . . .But during the decade when the first forty-five stories were written, he was unwilling to stray very far from the life he knew by direct personal contact, or to do any more guessing than was absolutely necessary.[4]

Since Hemingway was writing about his own experiences, and in some cases about very early experiences, the question arises whether nostalgia had any effect on the way he converted incidents in his life into fiction. On the surface there seems to be nothing sentimental or nostalgic about the Nick Adams stories; on the contrary, they are characterized by a rigorous objectivity. The events in the stories deal with violence, perversion, and unpleasantness, which are certainly not subjects generally associated in any way with nostalgia. However, by using the definition of nostalgia given in the introduction, and by examining Hemingway's personality, it can be shown that nostalgia is a significant item to be considered in a study of Hemingway and his short stories.

Each of the Nick Adams stories shows Nick learning and maturing through experiences which introduce him to the harsh realities of life. As we read through the stories, we witness Nick's first encounters with birth, violent death, drinking, sexual perversion, love, love ending, war, wounds, and so on. Hemingway tells us in one of the quotations above of his plan to write one story about each thing he knew, and it seems that in each story he attempted to portray Nick discovering a

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[4] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, pp. 127-28.

truth about the way life is. Therefore, the Nick Adams stories, along with those which while they do not have Nick in them are closely related to those that do, give us a kind of documentary account of the experiences which made the mature Nick Adams the kind of person he is, and, of course, the mature Nick Adams goes by many names: Jake Barnes, Fredrick Henry, Robert Jordan, Richard Cantwell.

As the young Hemingway in Paris began his first attempts at serious fiction with his desire to write truly by writing of what he knew, it is natural that he drew upon what he considered to be the important experiences of his own life. It is interesting, however, that the stories dealing with Nick's early life are all set in Michigan and none in Oak Park. Even when Harold Krebs, a young man much like Nick, comes home from the war in "Soldier's Home," his home is not in Oak Park but in Oklahoma. Hemingway's early life in Oak Park had not been completely happy; in fact, he ran away from home several times. On the other hand, his greatest love was the outdoors and hunting and fishing, and this is what northern Michigan meant to him. As a sensitive young man in a foreign country, Hemingway was affected by nostalgia, but it was not nostalgia for his home near Chicago, which apparently did not hold many fond memories for him; it was nostalgia for the country in Michigan which he loved and which had been the scene of his initiation into the active outdoor life which meant so much to him.

Hemingway apparently could not write about Michigan until he got away from it. In describing his early years in Paris in A Moveable Feast, he says this about a time when he was leaving Paris to go on a short trip to another part of France:

> Maybe away from Paris I could write about Paris as in Paris I could write about Michigan. I did not know it was too early

> for that because I did not know Paris well enough. But that was how it worked out eventually.[5]

It seems that in many cases two things were necessary for Hemingway to write successfully about a place or experience: first, he had to know the place or experience well; and second, he had to be away from it either in time or distance. He wrote his stories about Michigan in Europe; he wrote his work on Africa and his work on the Spanish Civil War in the United States. Getting the proper distance from his subject and his setting was an important concern for Hemingway. He mentioned in several places that he was too close to a particular subject to write about it. He seemed to feel that if he gave an experience time to settle into his memory, he could free himself from immediate prejudices and emotions which would cloud his perspective. Time and distance gave him a better control of his subject, and, of course, time and distance are the two vital elements which produce nostalgia. An example of the way nostalgia affected Hemingway's writing is indicated in a statement by Charles Fenton concerning some writing Hemingway did about the Black Forest. When Hemingway, as a young newspaperman, was forced by circumstances to return to Toronto from Europe,

> He turned frequently to his European memories, for stories about continental hunting, fishing, and skiing. His nostalgia even permitted him to make a new assessment of his Black Forest experience of two summers before. A Toronto exile had cleansed the original dispatches of their querulous prejudice; to that extent the Canadian banishment was a purge.[6]

In the introduction nostalgia was defined as a person's emotional response to memories of places or events which are, for him, associated

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[5]MF, p. 7.

[6]The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 251-52.

with pleasure or satisfaction of some sort. At first it might be difficult to understand how nostalgia can apply to Hemingway's short stories, many of which are concerned with subjects generally considered unpleasant. It may be true that he wrote about places which he liked, but what about the events? What does nostalgia have to do, for example, with a story like "Indian Camp," in which the boy, Nick, watches his father perform a Caesarean operation on an Indian squaw with a jack-knife and sees the slit throat of the husband in the bunk above who has killed himself because he could not stand to hear his wife's screams any longer? The answer lies in Hemingway's personality and his attitude toward life and art. He was extremely interested in violence, sex, and death and these themes are found throughout his writing. We have mentioned already the importance he placed on knowing his subject well and writing about things the way they truly are. When we put these things together, we can begin to understand how much Hemingway would value any experience which made it possible for him to know the truth about that which interested him and enabled him to write as one having authority. Therefore, many of Hemingway's experiences which he transformed into short stories (as we see them, for example, in the Nick Adams stories) had a nostalgic significance for him, not because they were particularly pleasurable at the time they transpired, but because they later brought a certain satisfaction to him as a writer who was vitally interested in knowing how things looked, felt, tasted, and smelled so that he could write truly about them.

Laying aside these considerations of Hemingway's personal nostalgia in relation to the short stories, let us examine how nostalgia functions as a technical device in particular stories. In A Moveable

Feast, at the point where Hemingway reflects on the time he began thinking he should write a novel, he says that he decided he would not write one just because it was the thing to do; he would wait until his impulse to write one could not be overcome. "In the meantime," he says, "I would write a long short story about whatever I knew best." As he walked up the rue Bonaparte, he began to decide on a subject: "What did I know best that I had not written about and lost? What did I know about truly and care for the most? There was no choice at all."[7] There was no choice because he thought the answer was obviously trout fishing in Michigan, and the story he sat down to write at the time was "Big Two-Hearted River." This story in two parts is not just a detailed account about a man's solitary fishing trip. "The story was about coming back from the war but there was no mention of the war in it."[8]

Under the surface of the objective, detailed description of setting up camp, cooking, eating, catching grasshoppers, and so on, we can sense a tension. It is obvious that Nick is returning to a place which is familiar, a place where he likes to be, and he is going to do something he loves to do, fishing; but it is also obvious that it has been some time since he was there fishing--he remembers that he had paid eight dollars for his tapered fly line "a long time ago"--and during the time since he was there last he has undergone some kind of extremely nerve-racking experience. Now, as Nick returns to "The good place," the place which is associated with a certain part of his past--fishing and hunting, the river and the woods--which he does not want to forget, it is as though

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[7] MF, p. 76.

[8] Ibid.

he wants to rub out his immediate past and begin clean again here in the woods. He is deliberately slowing down his emotional metabolism in order to allow scar tissue to form over the wounds of his war experience, and he is trying to use his pleasant and healthy past experience as a kind of salve to aid the healing process. Nick turns to nostalgia, for it is a kind of nostalgia which has prompted him to return, in order to stabilize his emotions and get control of himself. Nick concentrates very deliberately on the small things he is doing in order to keep himself from thinking, because he is afraid that his thoughts will turn to his bad experience and he will lose control of his emotions. He feels that he must take all sensations slowly, even the excitement of battling a large trout which he has always enjoyed. After he has hooked an especially big fish and lost it, he climbs out of the stream and sits down on a log because "He did not want to rush his sensations any." Nick avoids going into the swamp. It is as though the swamp symbolizes the depths of his emotional experience which he is not prepared to enter yet. He thinks that there will be plenty of time to fish the swamp, or in other words, to plumb the meaning of his recent past experience which now seems like a horrible nightmare that he is not able to cope with.

The story "Now I Lay Me" has an important relationship to "Big Two-Hearted River" and should be read before this latter story in order for Nick's solitary fishing trip to be fully understood. In "Now I Lay Me" we find Nick at a point closer in time to his traumatic experience, and we learn what that experience was: he "had been blown up at night," and had felt his soul go out of his body and then come back. Now he cannot sleep because he is afraid "That if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body." Here, as in "Big Two-

Hearted River" Nick's immediate past experience is like a dark abyss which must be avoided at all costs. As he is lying on the floor listening to the silk worms, thousands of miles from home and with his wounding still vivid in his memory, it is not surprising that he turns to nostalgic recollections to occupy his mind.

> I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them.[9]

Remembering the parts of his past in which he was whole and active and happy seems to make it possible for him to get a hold on himself so that he can keep his soul from slipping out of his body or keep himself from lapsing into one of those spells depicted in "A Way You'll Never Be." His memory of his early youth is his important link to sanity and emotional stability, and he returns again and again to such reminiscences.

> On those nights I tried to remember everything that had ever happened to me, starting with just before I went to the war and remembering back from one thing to another. I found I could only remember back to that attic in my grandfather's house. Then I would start there and remember this way again, until I reached the war.[10]

He goes back and forth over his memories, but notice that just as in "Big Two-Hearted River," he stops his fishing when he reaches the edge of the swamp, here he stops his remembering when he reaches the war. In the same way that he will not be prepared to enter the swamp when he returns home he is not yet prepared to reflect on his war experience. Another interesting thing about the nostalgic recollections in this story is that they reveal a good deal about the young man who is remembering and add a

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[9]SS, p. 363.

[10]SS, p. 365.

new dimension to our understanding of his present condition.

"Soldier's Home" is the story of another young man coming home from the war. Harold Krebs is much like Nick Adams, but apparently he has not suffered as extreme a psychological shock as Nick did, and there is no mention of any physical wounds. Harold's war experience has left him rather listless and indifferent about his future. He just wants to be left alone. He does not want to involve himself in the ordinary living that is going on around him because it seems too complicated to him. Going out with girls, arguments with his parents--even these things are too complicated for him right now. Unlike Nick, Harold can think about the war; in fact, the only thing that means much to him is being able to think back on the times during the war when he had acted bravely and well, and his main interest is reading about the war.

> He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they came out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier. That made a difference.[11]

This nostalgic re-living of the war is satisfying to Harold, but he discovers that its value is dependent on truth. At first he did not want to talk about the war. Later he felt a need to talk but no one wanted to listen because Harold had returned late from the war and people had already heard their fill about it. He found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this a couple of times, he reacted against the war and against talking about it.

> A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he

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[11] SS, p. 148.

> thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves. . . .Krebs acquired the nausea in regard to experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had really been a soldier and they talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the east post of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way he lost everything.[12]

Harold's memories are very important to him in this period after the war while he is trying to adjust because he finds comfort and meaning in them. Those times when he had acted as a man should act were significant and meaningful and he clings to them amid life in his home town where nothing seems very significant or meaningful, but through a few lies he loses even these memories, and when he has lost them, he has lost everything.

Past experience is important to a man because it actually constitutes what that man is--this seems to be the notion that is expressed in much of Hemingway's writing. If, like Nick, the man is unable to cope with or control his memories of past experience, or if, like Harold, he distorts them with falsehood, his life is not going to be very satisfying. Perhaps this concern with self-discipline and honesty is a reflection of Hemingway's own philosophy of life and esthetic standards.

The beginning lines of "In Another Country" exemplify Hemingway's skill in description and in making his setting real.

> In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains.[13]

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[12] SS, pp. 145-46.

[13] SS, p. 267.

It is interesting to note that the realism of this passage is really not in what is seen, but in the fact that someone is intensely seeing. What is described is in the past but it has a certain immediacy. This realism and immediacy are the result of the skillful use of a first person recollection form of writing. The passage above is a rather nostalgic evocation and its effectiveness derives to a certain degree from this tinge of nostalgia. Nostalgia is a common element of human experience and readers will respond to it, almost unconsciously, if it is presented skillfully. This entire story is a kind of reminiscence which the writer shares with the reader. It has immediacy, but part of its poignancy comes from the fact that the narrator reminds us that it is a personal recollection of something which happened in the past: "But this was a long time ago, and then we did not any of us know how it was going to be afterwards." Hemingway, in this story, uses nostalgia as a technical device to achieve realism and emotional intensity. The realism is achieved by having the description be the vivid personal recollections of the narrator, and the emotional intensity is heightened by having the reader see the experience in terms of the effect it has had on the narrator and the way it has settled into his memory. We will come back to this point in discussing other of Hemingway's works.

In "Fathers and Sons" we find Nick Adams as a man of thirty-eight years with a son of his own. While these two are driving to a place where they are going to hunt quail, Nick begins to remember about his youth. It is in the fall of the year and nearing the end of a day--a natural time for nostalgic recollection. Thinking of quail hunting reminds Nick of his father. "Nick could not write about him yet, although, he would, later but the quail country made him remember him as he was when Nick was a boy

and he was very grateful to him for two things: fishing and shooting." Outside of their experiences together hunting and fishing, it is obvious that Nick and his father had not been very close. Nick says that "After he was fifteen he had shared nothing with him." He remembers that his father had been as unsound on sex as he had been sound on fishing and shooting, and this leads him to recollections of his sexual relationship with Trudy, an Indian girl. The story concludes with Nick's son asking questions about his grandfather and about Indians. Nostalgia is a most important element in this story because it is Nick's personal reminiscences that give meaning to the relationship of fathers and sons which the story is about. One of the things that this story seems to say is that the personality of each person is made up of memories, many of which are simply fleeting reminiscences, and these reminiscences, though often subtle, have meaning and value for the individual, but are almost impossible to communicate to others, even in the relationship of father and son. Places and experiences carry different emotional associations for each person, and these evanescent, often bitter-sweet associations are almost impossible to explain to someone else. They are like the trees mentioned in the first paragraph of the story--Nick and his son drive "on under the heavy trees of the small town that are a part of your heart if it is your town and you have walked under them, but that are only too heavy, that shut out the sun and that dampen the houses for the stranger." Nick's father had not been able to explain to him what his experiences had meant to him any more than Nick is able to explain to his son the emotions connected with experiences in his past. The only way that Nick's father could communicate to Nick what fishing and hunting meant to him was by teaching Nick how to do those things so that he could have his own

experience of them, and Nick is doing the same thing with his son. When Nick's son asks him what it was like when he was a boy and hunted with the Indians, Nick's short answer in contrast with the recollections which have just been running through his mind is drab and incomplete. When the boy asks about the Indians--"But what were they like to be with?"--Nick replies, "It's hard to say." He has a flash of memories cross his mind, but he knows it is useless to try to communicate them.

> Could you say she did first what no one has ever done better and mention plump brown legs, flat belly, hard little breasts, well holding arms, quick searching tongue, the flat eyes, the good taste of mouth, then uncomfortably, tightly, sweetly, moistly, lovely, tightly, achingly, fully, finally, unendingly, never-endingly, never-to-endingly, suddenly ended, the great bird flown like an owl in the twilight, only it daylight in the woods and hemlock needles stuck against your belly.[14]

He has to settle for the answer, "they were very nice." Nick, as a boy, had asked his father the same question and had received the same kind of answer: "When I asked him what they were like he said that he had many friends among them." Nick's son will have to find his own answer, just as Nick did, in his own experience. When he asks his father if he will ever live with the Indians, his father says, "I don't know. That's up to you."

The relationship between the fathers and sons in this story is a rather ironic one. It is obvious that in some ways they are inherently alike, and there is the blood loyalty which prompts the boy to think he must pray at the tombs of his father and his grandfather, and there is the bond of the shared hunting experience, but regardless of these connections, each is an individual who must live his own life and make his own decisions. Each has his own inner emotional life, and in this realm

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[14]SS, p. 497.

there is very little communication or closeness. Nostalgia is an important part of a man's inner life, and it is extremely personal and subjective. Hemingway reached a point in his writing where he recognized that men must depend on each other. The last words of Harry Morgan in To Have and Have Not are "No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody chance." For the title of his novel about the Spanish Civil War he went to a quotation from John Donne which says no man is an island. But regardless of this consciousness of a man's responsibility to other men which Hemingway experienced in the thirties, when it comes to personality and psychological make-up, each man is an island and Hemingway was always aware of this. In all of his writing it is the individual that he is interested in, and a person's individuality derives in great measure from his past experience and the way he remembers it and interprets it. In most of his fiction Hemingway gives us glimpses of his character's past, and often these glimpses are very important to our understanding of that particular character. "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" is a good example of this process.

As Harry lies on his cot on the hot African plain, his leg rotting with infection, his mind repeatedly turns to recollections of his past. These flashbacks contain an unusual variety of impressions and experiences, but to one acquainted with Hemingway's biography and his other writing they are familiar. These flashbacks are long, constituting a good deal of the story, and were probably meant to serve several purposes. For one thing, they provide contrast. Harry's reminiscences are contrasted with "the heat shimmer of the plain" which is associated with the rotting leg, the hyena, Helen, etc. In the flashbacks we see Harry as a young writer filling his mind with material to write about.

> There was so much to write. He had seen the world change; not just the events; although he had seen many of them and had watched the people but he had seen the subtler change and he could remember how the people were at different times. He had been in it and he had watched it and it was his duty to write of it. . . .[15]

As we shift from the flashbacks to the present we learn that he did not fulfill this duty--he betrayed himself and his talent.

In addition to providing contrast, perhaps these flashbacks were meant to portray the way a dying man supposedly sees his life in review. It is obvious that this story is about the process of dying, and maybe Hemingway meant to indicate that recollection is part of that process. The most important reason for the flashbacks, however, is that this overlaying of the past upon the present serves to clarify and explain the present. Harry's present condition of dying from a scratched leg in a lonely part of Africa would not be meaningful if it were not seen in the perspective of his recollections of the past. The relationship of nostalgia flashbacks to the action of the present will be explained in greater lengths in the section on Green Hills of Africa.

"Get a Seeing-eyed Dog" appeared in the Atlantic Monthly (November 1957) as one of "Two Tales of Darkness." Both of these tales are about blindness--something which Hemingway, who had much trouble with his eyes, always feared. "Get a Seeing-eyed Dog" tells of a writer who through some kind of accident has lost his sight and some of his memory. He has returned with his wife to a house on the coast of Italy which holds memories for them. As they sit together, the man is remembering, trying to get a grip on his past. The first line of the story is "And what did we do then?' he asked her." As they talk of past experiences she says

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[15]SS, p. 66.

"You're remembering well today. Don't do it too much." The wife seems concerned that too much remembering will be an emotional strain for him, or perhaps she is afraid that remembering happy times will make him bitter about his present condition. At any rate, she offers to read to him, hoping to get his mind off remembering, but he does not want this. "No, please don't read. Just talk. Talk about the good days." Again she tries to change the subject. "Do you want to hear what it's like outside?" But the man will not be dissuaded; he seems to feel a need to explore the past. He says that they are lucky to have come here because he remembers it so well; they could not have come to a better place for him. The man in this story, like Nick Adams in "As I Lay Me" or "Big Two-Hearted River," has undergone physical wounding accompanied by psychological shock. He, too, has returned to a "good place," a place associated with pleasant experiences, and he, too, is trying to adjust by remembering, trying to get control of himself by putting his past experience in order. Although he is not alone, as Nick was on his fishing trip, he wants to be. He thinks that he must get his wife away as soon as possible without hurting her. He wants to make his adjustment in solitude.

Nostalgia, in one form or another, is recurrent in the short stories. It lies at the base of Hemingway's approach to short story writing, in which he attempted to write one story about each thing he knew about and relied heavily on personal experience. As a technical device in the stories, it grew naturally out of Hemingway's own realization of the importance of nostalgia to the inner life of the individual. In the following chapters, other evidence will be considered which also indicates that for Hemingway nostalgia was a vital constituent of the self or personality, and if used properly, it could comfort a man, help him recover from the blows life delivers, and strengthen him in fighting the good fight.

CHAPTER II

BULLS AND BIG GAME

The thirties, and particularly the period from 1932 to 1937, was a time of experimental work for Hemingway, both in fiction and non-fiction. This period began with the publication of Death in the Afternoon (1932) and was brought to a close with The Fifth Column (1937). Other works included in this period are Green Hills of Africa, To Have and Have Not, and two of Hemingway's longest and best short stories, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro." The writing of this experimental period is not Hemingway's best work, but it certainly has merit, and it is very important to an understanding of Hemingway's writing as a whole. The two non-fiction books on bull-fighting and big-game-hunting are especially interesting to the student and critic of Hemingway because they contain a good deal of Hemingway's personal philosophy as well as what might be termed his philosophy of art.

Throughout his lifetime Hemingway had a great love for bull-fighting and hunting and fishing. "There was even a time, in Burgette in 1925, when he told his new friend Fitzgerald that his idea of heaven would be a big bullring in which he owned two barrera seats, with a troutstream outside that no one else was allowed to fish."[1] This statement was made before he had been to Africa, and after his experience big-game-hunting he probably would have changed this conception

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[1]Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 143.

of heaven enough to place the bullring and the troutstream in the heart of the African bush. Since Hemingway in Death in the Afternoon and Green Hills of Africa is writing about places he loved and experiences he cherished, it is natural that we might expect the element of nostalgia to have some significance in an analysis of these books.

On a practical level, Death in the Afternoon is a kind of Baedeker handbook to bullfighting. Malcolm Cowley has said that it is the best book written on the subject in any language, and Spanish critics, who should be in a position to judge accurately, have agreed to its value as a clear exposition of the drama of the bullfight. It contains description of the three phases of the bullfight; explanation of the techniques used by the various participants, including the bull; evaluation of a number of bullfighters; discussion of bull breeding, and so on. It is a complete textbook for the layman.

On another level, Death in the Afternoon is a miscellany containing reflections on life and death; excursions into literary criticism; comments on Spanish painters, venereal disease, drinking, and the sex life of bulls. It ranges from serious discussion of the aesthetic and tragic elements in bullfighting to anecdotes, ironic leg-pulling, and harsh satire. In addition to these things, it has a final chapter, a kind of epilogue, filled with subjective impressions of Spain which S. F. Sanderson describes as "A haunting, emotional evocation of Spain and what it has meant to him, which stands amongst the most moving passages he has ever written."[2]

The idea of writing some such book as Death in the Afternoon had been in Hemingway's mind for seven years before the final version appeared,

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[2]Ernest Hemingway, p. 64.

Carlos Baker points out.[3] In his first letter to Maxwell Perkins on April 15, 1925, Hemingway mentioned that he wanted to do an illustrated book on bullfighting. But this plan was laid aside while he prepared In Our Time for publication and composed The Torrents of Spring, The Sun Also Rises, Men Without Women, and A Farewell to Arms. During this period, he spent a good deal of time in Spain and continued studying the bullfight, making notes and writing short pieces on the sport. Hemingway was greatly attracted to bullfighting and had become a genuine aficianado; he had also fallen in love with the country in which this sport took place, so when he wrote his book on bullfighting, he wanted it to be more than a textbook history of apologia; he wanted, if possible, for it to convey the very experience of Spain and the bullring. --he wanted it to be "the bullfight itself."[4]

It is probably this desire to portray the total experience of bullfighting in Spain which accounts for the careful, detailed description of places, people, animals, tastes, odors, temperatures, etc. which are found throughout the book and particularly in the last chapter. And it is in this description that we can note elements of nostalgia. In chapter four, where Hemingway is apparently giving his readers a guide to bullfighting in Spain, telling them where to go, how to travel, and where and what to eat, it becomes obvious that what he is really doing is simply remembering his own pleasant experiences.

> Valencia is hotter in temperature sometimes and hotter in fact when the wind blows from Africa, but there you can always go out on a bus or the tramway to the port of Grau at

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[3] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 145.

[4] Letter from Hemingway to Maxwell Perkins, 12/6/26, cited in Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 145.

> night and swim at the public beach or, when it is too hot to swim, float out with as little effort as you need and lie in the barely cool water and watch the lights and the dark of the boats and the rows of eating shacks and swimming cabins. At Valencia, too, when it is hottest, you can eat down at the beach for a peseta or two pesetas at one of the eating pavilions where they will serve you beer and shrimps and a paella of rice, tomato, sweet peppers, saffron and good seafood, snails, crawfish, small fish, little eels, all cooked together in a local wine for two pesetas and the children will go by barelegged on the beach and there is a thatched roof over the pavilion, the sand cool under your feet, the sea with the fishermen sitting in the cool of the evening in the black felucca rigged boats that you can see, if you come to swim the next morning, being dragged up the beach by six yoke of oxen.[5]

Such descriptive passages as the one above, tinged with nostalgia, give the book a certain amount of emotional body and make Spain in the twenties come alive for us. The book has romantic overtones which are the natural consequences of writing about a place one loves and has been happy in. Carlos Baker describes Death in the Afternoon as "A very careful and sometimes labored distillation of all the years during and after his nominal residence in Paris, when Hemingway was nearly as often in Spain as out of it. . . ."[6]

Apparently, Hemingway felt that within the first nineteen chapters of the book he had not been able to distill enough of his experience in Spain--he perhaps was not satisfied that he had been successful in making his book be the bullfight rather than be about it, for he added a last chapter which seems to be nothing more than an enumeration of the impressions which should have been in the book.

> If I could have made this enough of a book it would have had everything in it. The Prado, looking like some big American college building, with sprinklers watering the grass early in the bright Madrid summer morning; the bare white mud hills looking

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[5] DA, p. 44.

[6] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 147.

> across toward Carabanchel; days on the train in August with the blinds pulled down on the side against the sun and the wind blowing them; chaff blown against the car in the wind from the hard earthen threshing floors; the odor of grain and the stone wind mills. It would have had the change when you leave the green country behind at Alsasua; it would have had Burgos far across the plain and eating the cheese later up in the room; it would have had the boy taking the wicker-bound jugs of wine on the train as samples; his first trip to Madrid and opening them in enthusiasm and they all got drunk including the pair of Guardia Civil and I lost the tickets and we were taken through the wicket by the two Guardia Civil (who took us out as though prisoners because there were no tickets and then saluted as they put us in the cab); Hadley, with the bull's ear wrapped in a handkerchief, the ear was very stiff and dry and the hair all wore off it and the man who cut the ear is bald now too and slicks long strips of hair over the top of his head and he was beau then. He was, all right.[7]

The entire chapter continues in this vein; it is as though Hemingway were trying to cram into nine pages all of the impressions he could remember which constituted Spain for him. At one point in the chapter he pauses to say "There really was such a year, but this is not enough of a book." This chapter contains Hemingway's most nostalgic writing. When he says that "This is not enough of a book," he is perhaps implying that no book could be enough of a book to capture completely the fleeting nostalgic reminiscences which constitute one's emotional attachment to places and experiences of the past. But this chapter is not simply an <u>ubi sunt</u> complaint about where are the trips to the bullfight of yesteryear, for the charge of sentiment that it carries is neutralized at the end. One of Hemingway's friends has told him that Pamplona has changed very much and he won't go there any more. To this Hemingway says

> . . .Pamplona is changed, of course, but not as much as we are older. I found that if you took a drink that it got very much the same as it was always. I know things change now and I do

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[7] DA, p. 270.

> not care. It's all been changed for me. Let it all change. We'll all be gone before it's changed too much. . . .[8]

This light mockery of nostalgia--saying that things as they used to be can be regained simply by tipping a few drinks--offsets the sentiment in this chapter. This is an example of the way Hemingway keeps nostalgia in check. He is well aware of the sweetness of thoughts about the "good old times," and he does not shun them; he enjoys them in their place, but keeps them bridled so that they do not interfere with his pursuits in the real world of the present. The important thing is to "work and learn," and we must accept the fact that pleasant experiences change and pass away.

> We never will ride back from Toledo in the dark, washing the dust out with Fundador, nor will there be that week of what happened in the night in that July in Madrid. We've seen it all go and we'll watch it go again. The great thing is to last and get your work done and see and hear and learn and understand; and write when there is something that you know; and not before; and not too damned much after. . . .The thing to do is work and learn to make it.[9]

This notion of the great thing being "to last and get your work done" is very important in Hemingway's writing and we will come back to it again, particularly in regard to Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea.

Wright Morris has contrasted the nostalgia of Hemingway with that of Scott Fitzgerald, saying that it is abundant in the writings of both men, but Fitzgerald takes it seriously and Hemingway doesn't.[10] Mr. Morris says that Hemingway's nostalgia "is carefully de-mothed before he wears it" --he can control it and, at times, laugh at it, but Fitzgerald

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[8] DA, p. 278.

[9] Ibid.

[10] "The Function of Nostalgia," in F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Arthur Mizener, pp. 28-9.

whom Morris calls the esthete of nostalgia, admits to its crippling effects. To make his point about Hemingway, Mr. Morris quotes the following passage from Death in the Afternoon. Hemingway, in speaking of the Good Old Days, those times when men were men and bulls were tremendous, sums up the past in these words:

> Things change very much and instead of great athletes only children play on the hihg-school teams now. . . .they are all children without honor, skill or virtue, much the same as those children who now play football, a feeble game it has become, on the high-school team and nothing like the great mature, sophisticated athletes in canvas-elbowed jerseys, smelling vinegary from sweated shoulder pads, carrying leather head guards, their moleskins clotted with mud, that walked on leather-cleated shoes that printed in the earth along beside the sidewalk in the dusk, a long time ago.[11]

Through the irony in this passage, Hemingway neutralizes and mocks the charge of sentiment that it contains.

Even though Hemingway has this tendency in Death in the Afternoon to puncture the balloon of sentiment which swells around memories, we should not conclude that he is unfeeling about the past, for though he shuns sentimental feelings about the past, he values the sincere kind of emotion in nostalgia which adds another dimension to one's present experience. There is evidence both in Hemingway's life and his writing which indicates that he thought the value of memories is something to consider in deciding our actions in the present. There is a certain amount of this attitude in his much-quoted statement about morals: "So far, about morals, I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after. . . ."[12] This seems to be placing a utilitarian value on the way you feel about your

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[11] DA, p. 183.

[12] DA, p. 4.

actions after you have done them. This means that one might do something not only for the immediate pleasure or excitement involved, or perhaps despite the immediate pain and fear involved, in order to enjoy the pleasure that comes in remembering he has done it. In speaking of the young men who participate in the capeas, or town-square bullfights, Hemingway says:

> The people who go into these capeas do so sometimes as aspirant professionals to get free experience with bulls but most often as amateurs, purely for sport, for the immediate excitement, and it is very great excitement; and for the retrospective pleasure, of having shown their contempt for death on a hot day in their own town square. There is absolutely nothing for them to gain except the inner satisfaction of having been in the ring with a bull; itself a thing that any one who has done it will always remember.[13]

Hemingway is speaking here from experience, for as a young man in the early 1920's he had participated in the running of the bulls and had been bumped around with the rest of the crowd of daring amateur toreros. Undoubtedly he enjoyed a "retrospective pleasure" and "inner satisfaction" from having done this because that was the case with so many of his other experiences. He would value this experience just as he did his experiences with war, woundings, and violent death, because it taught him and made him an insider--it gave him a certain authority to write about it.

In Death in the Afternoon Hemingway has explained much about bullfighting, and he has attempted to say much about a number of other things. Particularly, he has attempted to convey the emotional impact which Spain and the drama of the bullfight have had upon him because he feels that his haunting emotional responses are a vital part of the total experience.

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[13]DA, pp. 23-24.

The reader cannot appreciate fully what he desires to communicate unless he can cause him to taste the flavor of his experience in Spain, and this flavor lies in the fleeting nostalgic impressions which are so difficult to express. The practical aspects of the bullfight are well expressed, but Hemingway himself seemed to doubt his success in expressing the subtle emotional aspects, for in the last sentences of the book he says "No. It is not enough of a book, but still there were a few things to be said. There were a few practical things to be said." This may just be modest posturing, but even if Hemingway were not satisfied that he had put "everything" about bullfighting into the book, he nevertheless has achieved in this last chapter a most vivid and evocative expression of the subtle impressions that constitute an important part of a person's reaction to places and happenings which have impressed him.

Hemingway admits in his foreward that Green Hills of Africa is an experiment: "The writer has attempted to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month's action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination." The month's action mentioned here took place roughly from January 21 to February 20, 1934, during which time Hemingway was in East Africa hunting big game. The book was written later in 1934 in Key West and was published in February of the next year. Although it is the true account of a hunting trip, this book has the flavor of a novel. This effect is produced partly by its structure--the way in which Hemingway has chosen to narrate the month's action. He begins his account with just three days of the hunt remaining, and we learn what has happened up to that time through flashbacks. Suspense is provided by the natural excitement and suspense which accompany the pursuit of big game, and an element of

conflict derives from Hemingway's competition with the other hunter in the party.

Whenever one finds mention of this book in Hemingway criticism, he can expect to read the often-quoted sections in which Hemingway comments on writers and writing. The interest in this book for most literary critics has had its source almost entirely in these incidental sections; the rest of the book seems to have gone quite unregarded. This is natural enough, for most of the book would hold interest for and could only be fully appreciated by another hunter. Hemingway says at one point that all hunters everywhere are the same. There is a great deal of truth in this comment. All hunters seem to share in common a peculiar satisfaction in the pursuit and the kill. Whether this satisfaction comes from a love of the outdoors, or from the enjoyment of practicing a skill, or from some primitive instinct is hard to determine, but there can be no doubt that it exists and binds hunters together in a special comradeship. There is an interesting connection between this satisfaction in the hunt and nostalgia. Anyone who has sat with a party of hunters around a campfire in the evening knows that hunting experiences are never forgotten. They hold a special place in the memory and can be brought to mind under the slightest stimulation and be enjoyed time after time. Whenever a sportsman relates a hunting experience, it is seldom untinged by nostalgia, and this is true with Hemingway as he narrates his experiences in Tanganyoka. Carlos Baker says "The form of the book has in fact been conditioned throughout by Hemingway's 'emotionated' recollection of the best and worst parts of the safari."[14]

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[14] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 171.

Hemingway fell in love with Africa immediately, perhaps because it provided such good hunting, or maybe because it reminded him so much of Spain. He says "I loved this country and I felt at home and where a man feels at home, outside of where he's born, is where he's meant to go."[15] Africa seemed to have some kind of special nostalgic significance for him; before the hunt is half over he says "All I wanted to do now was get back to Africa. We had not left it, yet, but when I would wake in the night I would lie, listening, homesick for it already."[16] It is interesting that many years later the nostalgic reminiscences of the characters in The Old Man and the Sea (1952) and "Get a Seeing-eyed Dog" (1957) are about Africa. Hemingway himself, of course, returned to Africa a number of times, and kept himself surrounded by his African game trophies and skins right up to his last years.

With Death in the Afternoon Hemingway wanted his book to be the bullfight not just about it, and he attempted to accomplish this by using long lists of subjective impressions which might make it possible for the reader to share the emotional impact that Spain and bullfighting had on him. He did this because he knew that objective explanation alone could never make a reader who had never been in Spain at a bullring understand what he was getting at. This situation is somewhat different in Green Hills of Africa. Hemingway still feels that in order for a book on big-game-hunting to be good, it must make the reader feel what that experience is like. When Pop says "Most of the damned Safari books are most awful bloody bores," Hemingway agrees. "They're terrible. The only one I ever

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[15] GHA, pp. 283-84.

[16] GHA, p. 72.

liked was Streeter's. . . . He made you feel what it was like. That's the best."[17] Hemingway knew that if his Safari book was going to be any good, he would have to make his reader "feel what it was like." But he did not try to do this the same way as he had done in Death in the Afternoon. Perhaps the reason he did not is wrapped up in his comment that "all countries and all hunters are the same." In his book on Africa, Hemingway is writing the experience of the hunter, which has some kind of common element for all hunters in all countries. He does not rely upon subjective impressions because an objective narration, if done truly and accurately enough, will cause another hunter (and almost every man has had some taste of hunting) to feel what it was like. Though the foliage and the animals in Tanganyika are much different from those in Utah, when Hemingway's description of searching for and shooting a rhino or a kudu is accurate enough, the Utah deer hunter can feel what it was like. Even though Green Hills of Africa is an objective narration of Hemingway's hunting experiences, there is a certain amount of nostalgia inherent in the retelling of any hunting adventure which anyone with some hunting instinct will respond to.

In Green Hills of Africa we find a characteristic of Hemingway which he developed rather early in his career: an odd overlay of the past upon the present. We see this in the flashbacks in this book. While Hemingway is hunting for rhino, he sits down to rest under a tree. As he rests there his thoughts turn to his early years in Paris and he begins to remember places and happenings. These nostalgic flashbacks come from time to time in the course of the narrative, usually

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[17] GHA, pp. 193-94.

as Hemingway is resting during a strenuous hunt, and on the surface they appear to have no connection at all with the action of the present. It is obvious that they serve to vary the tempo of the narrative, for they often come just before a sudden rush of action, but this is not their only purpose. We find such flashbacks to fleeting reminiscences in many of Hemingway's works, and we will have occasion to examine them again, particularly in regard to For Whom the Bell Tolls and The Old Man and the Sea. The point to be made here is that these flashbacks are not without significant relevance to the present. This overlay of the past on the present is a way of clarifying and expanding our understanding of a man's present condition. Hemingway uses it as a technique for adding depth to his characters. Keiichi Harada, in an essay on The Old Man and the Sea, discusses how Hemingway uses the alteration of dream-memory and actual experience in his works. He points out that this alteration serves to clarify man's present condition by contrasting the past with the present: "The experiences of the past are not meaningless facts but are often 'recaptured' by the self through the descriminating and organizing process of the mind in order to establish one's self-identity. Associations and remembrances do not take place at random but are directed toward such an end."[18] What Hemingway had learned to do was not only use his own outward life as the basis of his fiction--his war experience, his travels, his hunting and fishing, etc.--but he had also learned that he could capitalize on his subjective, evanescent reminiscences of the past. As Carlos Baker puts it, "Already, in short, before he was forty, he was beginning to emphasize the changes time inevitably brings and to make

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[18]"The Marlin and the Shark: A Note on The Old Man and the Sea," in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, p. 271.

fictional capital from the remembrance of things past."[19]

There are a number of examples in Green Hills of Africa of Hemingway's notion that one's present actions can be evaluated in terms of how one will look back on them in memory. Hemingway derives great pleasure and excitement from hunting big game; in fact, he repeats nine times within the first seventy-two pages that he is doing what he likes most and is having a wonderful time. But in addition to this immediate enjoyment, Hemingway is aware that his trip will provide many pleasant memories for him to enjoy in the future. In his narration of stalking a lion in deep grass with only M'Cola, his native tracker, along with him, Hemingway says ". . . I knew that if I could kill one alone, without Pop along, I would feel good about it for a long time."[20] After he has made an exceptionally good shot and killed a rhino, Hemingway's wife says "You're pretty pleased with it yourself," and he replies "Don't worry about how I feel about it. I can wake up and think about that any night."[21] In both of these examples there is a concern for how he can look back on what he has done; in other words, part of the value of each experience lies in what kind of memory it will make. When Hemingway is feeling discouraged because his kudu were not quite as large as the one of his friend Karl, Pop says to him "You can always remember how you shot them. That's what you really get out of it."[22]

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[19]"Introduction: Citizen of the World," in Hemingway and His Critics, p. 9.

[20]GHA, p. 141.

[21]GHA, p. 80.

[22]GHA, p. 293.

This concern for the way experience will be remembered indicates Hemingway's respect for nostalgia, at least where hunting experiences are concerned. As was mentioned, all hunters enjoy reliving past hunts in memory, but there are very few who as they sight down on a big buck give any thought to how this experience will be remembered in the future. Hemingway's sense of constructing in the present a past worth remembering is a rather unique characteristic. It is as though his mind were a camera and he were collecting snapshots to fill an album which in the future will provide hours of nostalgic enjoyment as he thumbs through it. He would like to watch the sable on the hillside "and see them long enough so they belonged to me forever."[23] After he has shot a kudu and examined the beautiful animal lying on the ground, he does not want to watch the natives skin it because he would like to remember it as he found it.[24] As the hunting party passes through a little village where one of the group had been stalked by a lion while hunting kudu, he suggests they drink some special German beer "in order that we might remember the place better and even appreciate it more."[25] A sense of the importance of remembering pervades this book--it even closes on such a note. The hunt is over and the Hemingways and their friends are sitting in a restaurant overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

> 'You know,' P.O.M. said, 'I can't remember it. I can't remember Mr. J. P.'s face. And he's beautiful. I think about him and think about him and I can't see him. It's terrible. He isn't the way he looks in a photograph. In a little while I won't be able to remember him at all. Already I can't see him.'

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[23] GHA, p. 282.

[24] GHA, p. 235.

[25] GHA, p. 159.

> 'You must remember him' Karl said to her.
> 'I can remember him,' I said. 'I'll write you a piece some time and put him in.'

Hemingway found pleasure in closely observing and remembering not for their own sake alone, but also because they were the wellspring of his writing. He had carefully trained himself to always be aware of places, people, happenings, and his own feelings, to observe them carefully and remember them in detail. He advised his brother Leicester, an aspiring young writer, to do the same: "And remember, keep observing all the time. This is college for a writer."[26] "Try to remember everything about everything."[27] Although Hemingway tried to remember everything about everything, in his writing he was very selective in the impressions he used. He felt that if you had observed closely and remembered, then you knew your subject well enough that you could afford to be selective. In Death in the Afternoon he writes:

> If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.[28]

Part of Hemingway's concern for remembering, then, comes from his desire to write and to know his subject well enough that he can write with a special quality, but another part of that concern derives simply from the nostalgic enjoyment that comes from remembering. Is it not possible that at the base of his motivation to write and the satisfaction he got from being a writer was this special tendency to retain and cherish memories of past experience.

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[26] Leicester Hemingway, My Brother, Ernest Hemingway (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1963), p. 161.

[27] Ibid., p. 141.

[28] DA, p. 192.

CHAPTER III

THE SPANISH EARTH

The Fifth Column, Hemingway's only published play, came out of his experience in Spain during the Spanish Civil War; in fact, it was written in Madrid while that city was under bombardment. This play is not outstanding, and its weaknesses are due to more than the thirty-odd shells which hit the Hotel Florida while he was writing it. Perhaps Hemingway was unable to handle his material effectively because he was so close to it--he generally allowed his experiences several years to settle in his mind before he tried to write about them--or maybe the main problem was that although he was a master at dialogue and dramatic situations in the novel, he had not equipped himself with the special techniques and craftsmanship which work for the theater demands. Some people feel that the real value of The Fifth Column lies in the fact that it served to purge Hemingway of his intense emotional involvement in the fight against fascism so that in For Whom the Bell Tolls he was able to write with the maturity and proper aesthetic distance which made that novel great.

The Fifth Column deals with counter-espionage in Madrid during the thirties. Philip Rawlings, the protagonist of the play, is engaged in espionage for the Republican Loyalists. He poses as a drunken, dissolute war-correspondent who seldom does any work at his typewriter. Whiskey and sex are apparently what keep him from mental breakdown from the tension of his dangerous, unnerving work as a counter-spy. He divides

his affections between Anita, a Moorish tart, and Dorothy Bridges, an American journalist who wants to reform him and marry him. If the story has a moral, says Hemingway in his preface, "it is that people who work for certain organizations have very little time for home life."[1] The home life, such as it is, which Philip has not time for consists of sleeping with Dorothy and allowing her to shower small domestic favors on him, such as warming a tin of bully beef for him or tidying his room.

Dorothy, whose name might have been Nostalgia, Hemingway tells us in his preface, is a Junior-League-formed spectator of the Spanish war. She would like to take Philip and leave the upheaval in Spain for the delights of travel around the continent: steeplechases and fine dinners in France, shooting in Hungary, surfing on the beach at Melindi, and similar pursuits of the idle rich. In a way, Dorothy represents all of the events and places Philip had known before the war, which remain in his memory appearing even more piercingly sweet in contrast to the fear and horror of his life in Spain. But there is no turning back for him.

> He tells Dorothy, 'You can go. But I've been to all those places and I've left them all behind. And where I go now I go alone, or with others who go there for the same reason I go.'[2]

Nostalgia, therefore, serves to accentuate the basic conflict of the play. Philip has chosen his course of life out of a sense of duty, and his sense of responsibility is placed in opposition to his nostalgic feelings about life away from the conflict in Spain. Dorothy, a personification of nostalgia, uses all of her charms to lure him away from the cause to which he has given his allegiance.

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[1] The Fifth Column and the First Forty-nine Stories (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. vi.

[2] Ibid., p. 98.

But Philip is not to be dissuaded, any more than Robert Jordan, the hero of For Whom the Bell Tolls, is to be dissuaded from his commitment to the cause of the Spanish Loyalists. Hemingway had a great love for Spain and the Spanish people which dates back to the twenties when he was a young expatriate discovering the thrill of the bullfight. During the Spanish Civil War he spent a good deal of time in Spain and he worked in every way he could to support the side he thought would be best for the Spanish people.

> By the end of 1936 he had raised $40,000 on personal notes to help equip the Loyalists with ambulances and medical supplies. In January 1937 he became chairman of the Ambulance Committee, Medical Bureau, American Friends of Spanish Democracy. The name of the organization fairly described Hemingway's position and the reasons behind it.[3]

It is natural that Hemingway's dedication to this cause should be reflected in the fiction which he wrote at that time. The portrayal of Robert Jordan's involvement with the Spanish Loyalist cause comes off very well, but this is not the case with Philip Rawlings in The Fifth Column. Hemingway himself said

> I think The Fifth Column is probably the most unsatisfactory thing I ever wrote. . . . It was an attempt to write under what you could honestly call impossible conditions. After it, and after we were beaten in Spain, I came home and cooled out and disciplined myself and wrote For Whom the Bell Tolls.[4]

The time, setting, and personae of For Whom the Bell Tolls are rather limited, but Hemingway extended beyond these confines to achieve an amplitude and complexity which he had not previously attempted. As he had done before, he turned to the resources of nostalgia in order to put into the events of three days the many things he wanted to say in

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[3] Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 229.

[4] Quoted by Carlos Baker in Hemingway and His Critics, p. 6.

this novel. Because of the fictional requirement that a lifetime be compressed into three days, Hemingway made a fuller dramatic use of the memory flashback and of the inner monologue in this novel than in any of his others.

> By dipping into the thought-stream of the hero as he contemplates his present task and the events which have brought him to it, by making Pilar and other members of the guerrilla band relate their accounts of earlier episodes in the war, and by taking us inside the thoughts and memories of various characters, he enlarges its scope to almost epic proportions.[5]

Of course, all of the memory flashbacks in this book are not nostalgic, but the elements of nostalgia are present in many of them, and when they are, they are there for a purpose. Generally this purpose has to do with making time past work in a special way in time present.

The similarities between Hemingway's heroes are apparent, and these similarities tend to give Hemingway's work an organic quality. Almost all of his heroes have been physically or psychologically wounded, and in most cases the severe wounds have been inflicted during the First World War--as was the case with Hemingway himself. This means that often the character of one hero will take on additional meaning for the reader who becomes acquainted with the other heroes. For example, one might understand much more about Jake Barnes after he has read the Nick Adams stories or about Richard Cantwell after he has read about Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Fredrick Henry. The scars visible on a particular hero can usually be accounted for by his experience in the First World War and the totality of that experience comes from a familiarity with a number of Hemingway's works. But Robert Jordan is the first hero who is too young to have been in World War I. If Hemingway is to account for those ever-

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[5]Sanderson, Ernest Hemingway, p. 92.

visible scars, he must fill in again the strokes that made the original injuries, so that he can show them, and how they are being overcome. This point is made by Philip Young who goes on to say

> A world war has specific dates; to have been in it Jordan would have to be in his forties when he appeared in Spain, and that is too old for the picture Hemingway wanted to give. The kind of thing that happened to Nick up in Michigan, however, cannot be so precisely assigned to certain years. Thus in this novel Hemingway reaches all the way back to Nick Adams' childhood and comes up with a new 'short story' which is as representative of the early Nick stories as any in In Our Time.[6]

One of the functions of the nostalgic flashbacks in this novel, therefore, is to add depth to the main character. Robert Jordan cannot be related to the typical Hemingway hero in regard to the First World War, but he can be in regard to the psychic wounds of childhood which are at the crux of the Nick Adams stories. Jordan's recollection of the Negro being hanged and burned contains the same shock and horror as "Indian Camp," and his memories of his father and mother are reminiscent of "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife."

Robert Jordan's nostalgic reflections are another example of the point already made concerning the way Hemingway overlays the past upon the present to produce a new awareness of the patterns and meanings implicit in immediate, individual experience. By this method, such experience is intensified and given a new dimension. Generally, the events that Jordan remembers or thinks about are related either directly or indirectly to the thematic necessities of the novel. Thus he remembers the destruction of the Negro by the mob as counterpoint to Pilar's description of how the fascists were destroyed by a mob; he remembers saying good-bye to his father at the railway depot as a prelude to his good-bye

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[6] Ernest Hemingway, pp. 83-4.

to Maria; his recollections of his grandfather's Civil War experience suggest a certain identification between his grandfather's war and the one in which he is engaged; the reflections on his father's suicide are dramatically motivated by his own awareness of the forces which oppose him and his concern for performing well. In these ways the nostalgic serves to clarify and expand the important themes of the novel.

At one point in her description of Finito, the matador she once lived with, Pilar says "But I must tell certain details so that you will see it." This seems to be an expression of Hemingway's approach to writing this novel. He used 471 pages to portray the events of three days; there is plenty of room for detail, and this detail is always intended to help the reader see, hear, smell, and feel what is happening. It was mentioned in the introduction how Hemingway used certain details in his description of the setting which would permit the reader to create from his own nostalgic impressions the mountainous country around the doomed bridge. Hemingway even used odors in order to draw the subjective, nostalgic responses from his reader which he knew would provide his story with increased realism and intensity. Jordan describes such an odor of nostalgia, and it becomes more piercingly sweet in contrast to Pilar's foul odor of death:

> He smelled the odor of the pine boughs under him, the piney smell of the crushed needles and the sharper odor of the resinous sap from the cut limbs. Pilar, he thought. Pilar and the smell of death. This is the smell I love. This and fresh-cut clover, the crushed sage as you ride after cattle, wood-smoke and the burning leaves of autumn. That must be the odor of nostalgia, the smell of the smoke from the piles of raked leaves burning in the streets in the fall in Missoula.[7]

In the chapter above dealing with Death in the Afternoon, it was

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[7] FWBT, p. 260.

pointed out that in that book of Spain and bullfighting Hemingway made the statement "If I could have made this enough of a book it would have had everything in it." Then he proceeded to set down the nostalgic impressions which constituted the real Spain for him. It seems that in For Whom the Bell Tolls he was still extremely concerned about portraying the "real" Spain. In order to achieve what he desired in this novel, he had to do more than simply create characters with Spanish names and place them in a setting designated as Spanish mountains. He had to in some way convey the language of these people, how they think, how they love, what they want in life, their attitude toward death--in other words, their total cultural make-up. This was necessary if the novel was to achieve the depth of meaning and poignancy of feeling for which Hemingway was striving. One of the important methods he used to show the heart of the country was nostalgic recollection, just as in Death in the Afternoon he turned to nostalgic impressions to show the emotional core of the Spanish people. For example, Pilar's reminiscences of Valencia:

> We ate in pavillions on the sand. Pastries made of cooked and shredded fish and red and green peppers and small nuts like grains of rice. Pastries delicate and flaky and the fish of a richness that was incredible. Prawns fresh from the sea sprinkled with lime juice. They were pink and sweet and there were four bites to a prawn. . . . We made love in the room with the strip wood blinds hanging over the balcony and a breeze through the opening of the top of the door which turned on hinges. We made love there, the room dark in the day time from the hanging blinds, and from the streets there was the scent of the flower market and the smell of burned powder from the firecrackers of the traca that ran through the streets exploding each noon during the Feria.[8]

Such evocative memories do not further the action of the story in any way,

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[8] FWBT, p. 85.

but they enrich, activate and deepen our sense of Pilar's vital performance in the present as a representative of one aspect of the Spanish people. Likewise, the reflections of Andrés, a very minor character, as he carries Jordan's message do not contribute to the plot in any way, but they give insight into the Spanish peasant and how he feels about the bulls and the part they play in the Spanish culture.

> He loved the bullbaiting when he was a boy and he looked forward to it and to the moment when he would be in the square in the hot sun and the dust with the carts ranged all around to close the exits and to make a closed place into which the bull would come, sliding down out of his box, braking with all four feet, when they pulled the end-gate up. He looked forward with excitement, delight and sweating fear to the moment when, in the square, he would hear the clatter of the bull's horns knocking against the wood of his travelling box, and then the sight of him as he came, sliding, braking out into the square, his head up, his nostrils wide, his ears twitching, dust in the sheen of his black hide, dried crut splashed on his flanks, watching his eyes set wide apart, unblinking eyes under the widespread horns as smooth and solid as driftwood polished by the sand, the sharp tips uptilted so that to see them did something to your heart.[9]

Vivid recollection of this kind, occurring at numerous points in the novel as it does, gives a vividness and reality to the people and the county over which they are struggling, which in turn gives meaning to the important themes with which Hemingway was concerned.

There are times in this novel when Hemingway used nostalgic reflection not simply to broaden the base of emotional background but as a device for heightening dramatic intensity. On several occasions, Jordan, in the face of danger, has flashes of nostalgic recollection. There are probably several reasons why Hemingway did this. For one thing, these flashes of recollection are a natural psychic reaction to danger--an attempt at mental escape. As Jordan leaves camp to go to blow up the bridge, he feels very

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[9]FWBT, p. 364.

young, and he remembers the time as a boy when "he had taken the train at Red Lodge to go down to Billings to get the train there to go away to school for the first time." But he knows that this kind of thinking is not good:

> You're getting them again, he told himself. But I suppose there is no one that does not feel that he is too young to do it. He would not put a name to it. Come on, he said to himself. Come on. It is too early for your second childhood.[10]

These fleeting attempts at mental escape add an element of realism to Jordan as a character. In addition to this, this memory of leaving family to face something feared placed in connection with Jordan's leaving Maria to face the danger at the bridge provides an awareness of certain patterns and forms implicit in the immediate experience which intensify it and, as F. I. Carpenter says, give it a new "dimension."[11]

Another example of the way Hemingway used the nostalgic as a dramatic device can be seen in the death of the guerilla leader El Sordo. Just before he is killed, he experiences some fleeting nostalgic impressions:

> Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it nor fear of it in his mind. But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill. Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg and a hill and a valley and a stream with trees along it and the far side of the valley and the hills beyond.[12]

These impressions emphasize the dignity with which El Sordo meets death. As Ivan Kashkeen says, "He dies with his eyes open, but with such an acute sense of life's completeness that he may certainly be said to be alive to the last, alive in the midst of death."[13]

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[11] See Introduction above, p. 8.

[12] FWBT, pp. 312-13.

[13] "Alive in the Midst of Death" in Hemingway and His Critics, ed. Carlos Baker, p. 169.

In this novel, as in other of Hemingway's works which we have examined, we find the recurrent notion that nostalgia can be a comfort. One must not become so carried away by it that it becomes an escape from reality, but it can serve to soothe one during quiet moments. In Robert Jordan's case it is called the "giant-killer" and is carried around in a bottle. He carries a flask of absinthe, and he says that

> one cup of it took the place of the evening papers, of all the old evenings in cafés, of all chestnut trees that would be in bloom now in this month, of the great slow horses of the outer boulevards, of book shops, of kiosques, and of galleries, of the Parc Montsouris, of the Stade Buffalo, and of the Butte Chaumont, of the Guaranty Trust Company and the Ile de la Cité, of Foyot's old hotel, and of being able to read and relax in the evening; of all the things he had enjoyed and forgotten and that came back to him when he tasted that opaque, bitter, tongue-numbing, brain-warming, stomach-warming, idea-changing liquid alchemy.[14]

For Jordan, absinthe provides Hemingway's "moveable feast" which will be discussed in a later chapter.

Although nostalgia can be a solace at times, there is no place for it when one must come to grips with reality and comport himself as a man in a desperate situation. In the final scene of this novel, Robert Jordan is left wounded to hold off the enemy for a short time while his companions escape. As he begins to shift his broken leg so that he will be in position to fire his weapon, he thinks of the absinthe:

> Then he remembered that he had the small flask in his hip pocket and he thought, I'll take a good spot of the giant killer and then I'll try it. But the flask was not there when he felt for it. Then he felt that much more alone because he knew that there was not going to be even that. I guess I'd counted on that, he said.[15]

Jordan knows that what he must do he must do alone and there will be nothing

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[14] FWBT, p. 51.

[15] FWBT, p. 467.

to cushion the shock of it. Nostalgia can be of no comfort to him now: "Think about Montana. I can't. Think about Madrid. I can't."[16] It can be a guide for him, however, for in this closing scene the father-and-son theme which has been introduced into Jordan's nostalgic reflections at various earlier times is rounded off.

> Now, at the end of the line, as Jordan lies nearly fainting under the ballooning pain from his fractured leg, the father-grandfather opposition once more commands his mind. Suicide would be permissible under the circumstances. But the memory of his grandfather, his true spiritual ancestor, helps him to hold onto his courage and die in combat.[17]

In this last scene, as Jordan struggles with the idea of suicide, we see the main purpose for most of his nostalgic recollection which appears, with no apparent bearing on the plot, at various points in the novel.

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[16] FWBT, p. 470.

[17] Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 256.

CHAPTER IV

DEATH IN VENICE

Across the River and Into the Trees appeared ten years after For Whom the Bell Tolls, and for most Hemingway readers it was a great disappointment. It is generally rated as the least successful of the Hemingway novels. In regard to style, it has been the brunt of much parody; in fact, a number of critics have said that the novel itself is like a parody of the Hemingway style. The content has also been much criticized, generally because it is felt that the process of artistic translation was incomplete--Colonel Cantwell is too much Hemingway himself. Philip Young says "As Robert Jordan is about as far as the hero ever gets from being Hemingway himself, so Richard Cantwell is about as close to him."[1] Never, it seems, had Hemingway presented himself in such a thin disguise--even Cantwell's age matches Hemingway's to the year. Because this novel was so personal, its author, as he has indicated, found it almost intolerably poignant, but this poignancy, it seems, has not been appreciated even by many readers who are sympathetic to Hemingway. But regardless of the question of its importance in terms of artistic merit, this novel is important to the present discussion of the nostalgic in Hemingway's writing.

Across the River and Into the Trees is actually one long memory flashback. It is the recollection of an older man--one who knows that

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[1] Ernest Hemingway, p. 88.

he is soon to die. He remembers directly the events of the previous two days, but introduced into these memories are recollections that go back to his youth. Carlos Baker describes what underlay Hemingway's writing of this novel

> as youth recollected and then placed into dramatic contiguity, almost as in a palimpsest, with advancing age. For when the dying professional soldier Cantwell returns to the scenes of his youth for a few last hours before his personal time-wheel stops turning for good, it soon becomes evident that the confrontation between youth and age is one of the major thematic devices of the novel.[2]

It has been noted in the previous chapters that for some time before he wrote this novel of Venice, Hemingway had shown a marked interest in the effects which might be produced by the collocation of two widely separated periods of time, and such effects have been discussed in regard to particular works. The way in which the nostalgic past functions in this novel has been treated very perceptively by Carlos Baker in his Hemingway: The Writer as Artist. Some of the comments in this chapter will simply be restatements of the points he makes in his chapter titled "The River and the Trees."

There is a reminiscential quality about Across the River and Into the Trees, and all the tides, rivers and canals, all the boats, gondolas, bridges and moorings take on a special connotative meaning. S. F. Sanderson has said that the defects of this uneven novel "are redeemed by the elegaic, nostalgic evocation of Venice as the winter wind whips the waves around her ancient beauty."[3] But in its deeper reaches, Across the River and Into the Trees is a symbolic study of a complex state of mind. As Mr. Baker puts it, "It represents the recollection of things past in a

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[2]"Introduction: Citizen of the World" in Hemingway and His Critics, p. 10.

state of imaginative hypertension almost the equivalent of a spell."[4] It should be apparent to even the most cursory reader that, for Colonel Cantwell, every event of his last week-end in Venice has a special meaning--he is in an intense state of awareness. This state of awareness is produced partly by the fact that he knows he is going to die soon and partly by his returning to an area which has had a special significance for him since the time of his youth. He is filled with a joyful awareness of the way it was in the country around Venice in the days when he was a young lieutenant in the Italian Army. This is not a mere sentimental heightening of the good parts of his past, for Cantwell, like his creator, is not one to cry over the days that are no more.

> Everybody loses all the bloom, Hemingway once told Fitzgerald, A gun or a saddle or a person are all better when they are worn and the bloom is off them. You may lose everything that is fresh and everything that is easy. But you have more métier and you know more and when you get flashes of the old juice you get more results with them.[5]

But this is not to say that the past should be rejected. As was mentioned before, the past has value in understanding and interpreting the present. To be conscious of it in and through the present is to sharpen the meaning of every present incident.

Because of the state of recollection which the Colonel is in, objects and people take on symbolic meaning. Mr. Baker suggests, for example, that the bridges in Venice which Cantwell crosses serve him as symbolic reminders of certain milestones in his youthful experience.

> He never identifies them precisely, merely noting them as they pass, but one might guess that the first white bridge is childhood, the unfinished wooden bridge interrupted adolescence, the

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[4] Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 274.

[5] Ibid., p. 275.

> red bridge the first far-off war, and the high-flying white bridge an aspect of youthful ambition. At the end of all these comes the black iron bridge. It is no symbolic accident that this crosses the canal which leads into the Rio Nuovo--the New River. Across the river is where the Colonel will be going before the week-end is out.[6]

Renata, like Dorothy Bridges in The Fifth Column, is a personification of nostalgia. She is the figurative image of the Colonel's youth, still living in the beautiful city which he once saw from a distance when he fought for Italy on the plains of Veneto during the First World War. An important clue to her symbolic identity is the fact that she is "nearly nineteen" which was exactly the age of young Cantwell when he received his most severe wounds at Fossalta in 1918.

> Her youth, her freshness, and her bravery, like the seemingly inborn wisdom she sometimes displays, are qualities which evidently belonged to young Lieutenant Cantwell in that winter of his rapid growing-up. Renata carries the bloom which he, likewise, owned before the sale métier of war-making substituted the scarred, leathery, and battle-smoked patina he now shows.[7]

Another thing which serves to identify Renata with Cantwell's youth is her symbolic portrait. "While it is not truly me," says the Countess, "it is the way you like to think of me." The Colonel assists in the identification of the meaning of the portrait. At one point he says, "Portrait, boy or daughter or my one true love or whatever it is." The picture is interwoven, for him, with the nostalgia he feels if he looks back to his youth.

In Renata's presence, Cantwell is able to return imaginatively to the freshness of his youth. This is the meaning of what appears on the surface to be just a passing incident in Cantwell's hotel room. In washing for dinner, he has occasion to look at his face in the mirror. "It looks

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[6] Ibid., p. 278.

[7] Ibid., p. 283-84.

as though it had been cut out of wood by an indifferent craftsman, he thought." It is covered with welts and ridges and the marks of plastic surgery. "Well, that is what I have to offer as a gueule or façade, he thought. It is a damn poor offer." That face showing the marks of experience does not fit the mood he is in at that moment with his young lover waiting for him in the next room. "To hell with you, he said to the mirror. You beat up miserable. Should we join the ladies?" He leaves the bathroom and he is "as young as at his first attack."[8]

In Venice, the city of spells for Cantwell's intensified imagination, it is possible for youth and age to become fused, though only momentarily, for reality keeps breaking in. Such a fleeting feeling of a union with the past is seen when the Colonel and Renata are in the gondola. "Please hold me very tightly so we can be a part of each other for a little while," she says, and his answer, tinged with irony, is "We can try."[9] In the special atmosphere and mood of Venice, a degree of success seems possible.

In this novel, just as in the works discussed in previous chapters, we find a note of warning about becoming too preoccupied with the past. Even Colonel Cantwell, who, it seems, has given himself up almost entirely to thoughts of the past during his last trip to Venice, recognizes the danger in doing so. Even while he has the portrait of Renata, he knows very well that it is no substitute for the real thing. "The portrait is lovely to have," but in comparison to the living Renata "it is like skinning a dead horse."

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[8]ARIT, pp. 112-12.

[9]ARIT, p. 156.

> He recognizes in the painting a 'static' quality which makes it an inadequate substitute for the moving thing. He reflects, evidently, that one can lose himself so far and so long in the past that he gets out of touch with the salutary present. Looking at his own scarred face in the mirror, the Colonel draws the contrast: 'Portrait was a thing of the past. Mirror was actuality and of this day.'[10]

At the Gritti Palace Hotel where Cantwell is staying, Arnaldo, a waiter, says to him, "You go back a long way back, my Colonel." The Colonel replies, "I go back so damn far back that it isn't funny." "Do you remember everything from the old days?" asks the waiter. "Everything," says Cantwell.[11] The "old days" are very important to the Colonel; in fact, it is the nostalgic meaning of those old days which constitutes the fraternal bond he shares with the Gran Maestro and which accounts for their fictitious organization, El Ordine Militar, Nobile y Espirituoso de los Caballeros de Brusadelli. As Cantwell arrives at the Gritti, he greets the maître d'hotel with a warm handshake.

> Thus contact was made between the two old inhabitants of the Veneto, both men, and brothers in their membership in the human race. . . and brothers, too, in their love for an old country, much fought over, and always triumphant in defeat, which they had both defended in their youth.[12]

These two are also brothers in their nostalgic feelings about their youth when they fought together as sergeant and lieutenant in defense of that "old country" which they love. Throughout the novel, Cantwell experiences fleeting moments during which he is transported into the past: "The Colonel, who was a sub-lieutenant again now, riding in a camion, his face dust, until only his metallic eyes showed, and they were red-rimmed and sore, sat thinking."[13]

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[10] Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 286.

[11] ARIT, p. 73.

[12] ARIT, p. 55.

[13] ARIT, p. 121.

In one sense, Colonel Cantwell's last visit to Venice is a "sentimental journey." He is literally revisiting the important scenes of his youth before he dies, just as we might expect a man contemplating death to do in imagination. As he approaches Venice, he looks out "at all this country he had known when he was a boy." He thinks that it looks quite different now. "I suppose it is because the distances are all changed. Everything is much smaller when you are older."[14] His observation that everything seems smaller is very true, as anyone who has returned to scenes of his childhood knows. Hemingway himself must have experienced this phenomenon on his first return to Italy. This country means much to Cantwell, and, of course, this is Hemingway coming to the surface, for Hemingway's memories of the country where he received his wounds, which had such a great effect on his career as a writer, had great meaning for him. Hemingway once said about his first trip back to Italy, "I wouldn't go to Milano because I wanted to remember how it was."[15] Just as Colonel Cantwell is returning to the scenes of his youth to round out his life, Hemingway, through Cantwell, is rounding out a part of his life which has had a great influence on what he had accomplished as an artist: his wounding in youth at Fossalta.

"This country meant very much to him, more than he could, or would ever tell anyone," says Hemingway-Cantwell.[16] Actually, however, as Philip Young has pointed out, he found a most remarkable way to express what that region means. Cantwell takes instruments and surveys to find the exact spot on the ground where he had been struck.

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[14] ARIT, p. 12.

[15] Cited by Baker in Hemingway and His Critics, p. 8.

[16] ARIT, p. 33.

> Then in an act of piercing and transcendent identification, 'the Colonel, no one being in sight, squatted low, and looking across the river . . . relieved himself in the exact place where he had determined by triangulation, that he had been badly wounded thirty years before.'
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> At this point as never elsewhere, Hemingway confronts and acknowledges the climax of his life, after a pilgrimage which binds this book to his first one with an iron band. In his effort to come the full circle before he is done, the hero does not end his journey at the place where he first lived, but at the place where he first died. Then in the most personal and fundamental way possible to man, he performs this primitive ceremonial, which is revelation as nothing else can ever be of his mingled disgust and reverence for that event of his life by which the whole may be known, and by which it was unalterably determined.[17]

As was mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Hemingway repeatedly wrote out the experience of his wounding not to exorcise it from his memory but because he cherished it in a strange nostalgic way. When he had drawn all he could or all he desired from it, he finally buried it with an unusual primitive ceremony. Apparently, it was to appear no more.

In relation to the Hemingway-Cantwell return to the place of wounding, Philip Young quotes this statement from The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne:

> There is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghostlike, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime; and still the more irresistibly, the darker the tinge that saddens it.[18]

Mr. Young feels that no one in the history of American letters has demonstrated Hawthorne's insight with as much force and clarity as Hemingway and his hero. Is not this irresistible feeling which, it seems, both

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[17] Ernest Hemingway, pp. 92-3.

[18] Cited in Ernest Hemingway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), p. 18.

Hawthorne and Hemingway recognized a kind of dark, inscrutable form of nostalgia? The well of nostalgia is deep, and neither the psychologist nor the man of letters has plumbed its depth completely, but this attraction to the spot where some important personal event occurred bears a marked resemblance to the attraction of the nostalgic commonly acknowledged.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

The reviews and press notices of Across the River and Into the Trees were, on the whole, rather unfavorable. There was a current of thought which proclaimed that, unfortunate though it might be, Hemingway had lost his touch, his power as a novelist; but, speaking in a favorite Hemingway idiom, he was not down for the count. With the publication two years later of The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway was off the canvas and was the champion again. This short novel received almost unreserved acclaim and has generally been recognized as a Hemingway masterpiece.

On the purely literal level, this story of an old Cuban fisherman's struggle with a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream north of Havana is a magnificently written narrative, intense and moving. But even the unsophisticated reader recognizes an extra quality which goes beyond the literal level. The old man's struggle is like a fable or parable of invincible Man fighting the good fight with courage, endurance, and dignity. This work is probably the most allegorical and symbolical of the Hemingway novels and reveals him at the apex of his ability to organize closely and deal with symbols. Allegory and symbolism are always open to various interpretations. Hemingway himself said of this novel "I tried to make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and a real fish and real sharks, but if I made them good and true enough they would mean many things."[1]

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[1]Cited by Baker in Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, p. 323.

Santiago is an old fisherman who has gone eighty-four days without catching a fish; he is considered salao, "which is the worst form of unlucky." For the first forty days, a boy had been with him, but the boy's parents had forbidden their son to go out any more with such an unlucky old man. The boy loves the old man, who has taught him all he knows about fishing, and continues to look out for him though he can no longer fish with him. He brings him food and fresh bait and helps him carry his gear to his little boat. On the eighty-fifth day, the old man sails out farther than he had fished before in hopes of changing his bad luck, and about noon he hooks a large fish which stays down deep and begins to tow the old man in his little skiff away toward the northwest.

For two days and nights the old man hangs on to his fish, being scorched in the daytime by the sun and chilled by the cool of the nights. The fish continues to tow the small boat northward. On the third morning, the old man, who is dozing, is almost jerked out of the boat as the giant marlin comes to the surface and begins to jump. After a gruelling struggle which saps the old man of almost his entire strength, the fish is brought near enough to the boat to be harpooned. The old man, with cramped and aching muscles and bleeding hands, lashes the great fish to his small boat and sets sail for home.

On the return voyage, the fish is attacked by sharks, and although the old man fights nobly with every means available to him, he cannot keep the sharks from eating his wonderful fish, and by the time he reaches home, the giant marlin is little more than a skeleton. The old man beaches his boat with the pitiful evidence of his bad luck still lashed to it and stumbles to his hut where he collapses in exhaustion. In the morning the boy comes to take care of the old man and determines to fish with him

again despite his bad luck or what his parents will say.

In this last novel of Hemingway, the dominant theme of the Hemingway philosophy, fighting the good fight, which we have seen manifest throughout his writing, is crystallized into a concentrated poetic form and becomes a parable which evokes responses from deep within our emotional and moral being. We recognize in Santiago the symbol of the courageous, enduring, indomitable nature of man. "But man is not made for defeat," says the old man, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."[2] Nostalgia serves an important function for Hemingway in this novel which attempts to deal with the great theme of man's struggle in the universe. This story reinforces what Hemingway has expressed before concerning nostalgia: it can be a comfort and solace at times, but it must never become a means of escaping from the responsibility of confronting reality in all its harshness.

As the old man wearily returns from his eighty-fourth unfruitful day of fishing, the boy meets him at the shore and takes him to the cafe to buy him a glass of beer. As they sit together, the old man is "holding his glass and thinking of many years ago."[3] There seems to be a definite connection between the age of the old man and his bad luck; one seems to confirm the other in his own mind as in that of his fellow fishermen. It is natural, therefore, that Santiago in his age and bad luck should turn his thoughts to "many years ago," to when he was younger and his luck was better. The old man and the boy talk about the boy's first time in his boat. The boy had been only five years old and they

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[2]OMS, p. 114.

[3]OMS, p. 12.

had caught a good fish but one that gave them trouble in landing it. The old man asks the boy if he can remember:

> 'Can you really remember that or did I just tell it to you?'
> 'I remember everything from when we first went together.'
> The old man looked at him with his sun-burned confident loving eyes.[4]

The old man is very pleased that the boy can remember and seems to love him more because the two of them have shared experiences together which they both remember. These nostalgic recollections constitute a special tacit bond between them.

Going beyond the purely literal level, the boy is more than the old man's friend. He sometimes seems to reflect the old man's youth and becomes, in a sense, an objective correlative of the old man's boyhood. The old man tells the boy "When I was your age I was before the mast on a square rigged ship that ran to Africa and I have seen lions on the beaches in the evening."[5] He seems to associate the boy with Africa and the lions on the beaches, and these things represent to him his own youth. In his dreams, the lions

> played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy. . . . He no longer dreamed of storms, nor of women, nor of great occurrences, nor of great fish, nor fights, nor contests of strength, nor of his wife. He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach.[6]

The old man no longer dreams of the active life of which a younger man might dream. He is old and has reached a point where the sweetest dreams to him are the ones concerning his early youth, the time when he was the age of the boy. He loves the lions as he loves the boy because they both

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[4] OMS, p. 13

[5] OMS, p. 24

[6] OMS, p. 27.

provide a sweet comfort for him, a balm to soothe the wounds inflicted by a lonely life of poverty and strenuous work--the lions through their representing pleasant recollections of the past, and the boy through his help and companionship as well as his reminding the old man of his own youth. It is interesting that the old man dreams of lions; Hemingway the lion hunter might also have dreamed of lions.

Although the old man enjoys his dreams of the past and they are a comfort to him, he never allows them to become an avenue of escape from what he as a man knows he must do. No matter how rigorous and demanding life might become, a man is never justified in escaping into a dream world of the past--there is no dignity in this; it is the same as accepting defeat. The old man feels a compulsive need to prove his ability to struggle and win. "The thousand times that he had proved it meant nothing. Now he was proving it again. Each time was a new time and he never thought about the past when he was doing it."[7] The old man had caught many fish; he had shown many marlin "what a man can do and what a man endures," but in the old man's code, there is no place for nostalgia in the struggle of the present. In his battle with the giant marlin, the old man's past catches mean nothing and he doesn't think about them; all that matters for him now is fighting and enduring as he knows he should.

Nostalgia serves as a foil for the old man's noble struggle. The temptation to turn to thoughts of the past is always present, especially as the old man begins to tire. Repeatedly he wishes that the boy were there. It is as if he were wishing for the strength and energy

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[7] OMS, p. 73.

of his youth. As the cramps and aches from the unrelenting pull of the great fish become increasingly annoying, the old man says "I wish he'd sleep and I could sleep and dream about the lions. Why are the lions the main thing left?" But he immediately shakes off these kinds of thoughts. "Don't think, old man, he said to himself."[8] He seems to realize that if he is not careful the lions will become the only thing left, and he will be nothing but an old man living in the past, which to the old man would be defeat.

The old man resists the temptation to abandon himself to dreams of the lions, but as the sun sets (the proverbial hour for remembering) "he remembered, to give himself more confidence, the time in the tavern at Casablanca when he had played the hand game with the great negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks."[9] They had gone a day and a night with their elbows on a chalk line and their hands clasped so tightly that it brought blood out from under their fingernails. The odds had changed back and forth among the crowd of spectators looking on. Finally, just before the crowd had to go to their morning work, Santiago had forced the hand of the Negro down until it rested on the wood of the table. After that everyone had called him the champion. The old man seems to think that dreaming of the golden beaches of Africa with the lions playing on them is a pleasant thing and is all right if it comes naturally at night while he is on his bed of newspapers in his hut, but he must not turn to such dreams in the daytime to escape from the hardships of struggling with the great fish. Remembering the arm game, on the other hand, gives him more confidence. If he had so much strength when he was younger,

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[8] Ibid.

[9] OMS, p. 76.

surely if he has to he will be able to muster the strength necessary to kill the great fish he is hanging on to. Also, in that arm game he was, in a sense, on his own as he is in fighting the giant marlin. He remembers that "they fed the negro rum and lighted cigarettes for him," but apparently there was no one to do this for him.[10]

This flashback to the arm game is important in terms of technique. Just as in For Whom the Bell Tolls this story transpires during a rather short period of time--just a few days, and this nostalgic flashback serves in developing the old man as a character. It is important for the reader to know of Santiago's strength and endurance as a young man in order to understand how he, as an old man, is able to subdue such an enormous fish. This flashback is also important for the tempo of the story. The old man's long combat with the fish consists of periods of calm alternating with periods of abrupt violent action; these alternating periods give the story a kind of pulse beat. For example, during the second night the old man decides he must get a little bit of sleep or he will not be prepared to meet the final surface battle with the fish which he knows must soon come. He arranges his line so that he can doze for a while resting his head on the bow of his skiff.

> After that he began to dream of the long yellow beach and he saw the first of the lions come down onto it in the early dark and then the other lions came and he rested his chin on the wood of the bow where the ship lay anchored with the evening offshore breeze and he waited to see if there would be more lions and he was happy.[11]

This paragraph sets a very calm mood with its idyllic scene of the quiet beach in the dusk. The very length of this sentence with one clause after

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[10] OMS, p. 77.

[11] OMS, p. 90.

another joined by the coordinating conjunction produces a rhythmic, quieting effect. But notice how abruptly this peaceful mood is broken. "He woke with the jerk of his right fist coming up against his face and the line burning out through his right hand." The short dream of the lions is just a calm before the storm of the final conflict with the fish in which the marlin circles and leaps with the old man straining at the line till he cannot see clearly, but he still endures long enough to drive the harpoon into the fish's heart.

The old man lashes his enormous catch to his small boat and sets sail for home, but it is not long before the first shark strikes. The old man musters his strength again and kills the big Mako shark, but not before it has mutilated his fish. Again the old man wavers a little in his perseverance, for he knows this shark will be just the first of many. "It was too good to last, he thought. I wish it had been a dream now and that I had never hooked the fish and was alone in bed on the newspaper."[12] But he knows that these thoughts are not good. "'Don't think, old man,' he said aloud. 'Sail on this course and take it when it comes.'" However, as the old man says later, he gives himself good advice, but it is not easy to follow. "But I must think he thought. Because it is all I have left. That and baseball." Santiago knows he is old and that life doesn't hold much for him now. The only things of value for him outside of doing the fishing which he "was born to do" are thinking about his life and following the baseball scores. "Think about something cheerful," he tells himself feeling that "there was nothing to be done now." But this mood lasts just a moment.

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[12]OMS, pp. 114-115.

"Yes there is," he says aloud and he lashes his knife to one of the oars to serve as a harpoon to fight off the sharks he knows will come. He determines to beat down the ugly Galanos as long as he has any kind of weapon, even though he knows it is a hopeless fight.

After the old man kills the first shark, he begins thinking about death and killing.

> 'I killed him in self-defense,' the old man said aloud. 'And I killed him well.'
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> Besides, he thought, everything kills everything else in some way. Fishing kills me exactly as it keeps me alive. The boy keeps me alive, he thought. I must not deceive myself too much.[13]

Fishing is strenuous and is draining the old man's life and strength, but at the same time it is his means of sustenance and his reason for living. But it is not his only means of sustenance and it is not his only reason for living--the boy will see that he has food ("You'll not fish without eating while I'm alive."), and as long as the old man has the boy to teach and the boy causes him to remember the vitality of his own youth, he has a reason for living.

The big Mako shark had caused the fish to bleed, leaving a trail of blood which soon attracts many more sharks. The old man fights them with all his strength and every available weapon until he is left exhausted with the splintered butt of the tiller in his hand. When he lands his boat, he is so weary that he stumbles to the ground five times in carrying his mast to his little shack, where he falls asleep "With his arms out straight and the palms of his hands up."[14] The next day the boy

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[13] OMS, p. 117.

[14] OMS, p. 134. For discussion of the obvious Christian symbolism in these actions see Young, Ernest Hemingway, pp. 100-101; Baker, Hemingway: The Writer as Artist, pp. 299-301, 319-320.

comes to care for him and tells him "Now we fish together again." When the old man protests that he is not lucky any more, the boy says "The hell with luck. I'll bring the luck with me." The boy leaves the old man to rest and "get well," and the last line of the book is "The old man was dreaming about the lions." Here are the dreams of the lions again, not acting as a means of escape but as a healing medicament which will prepare the old man to fish again with the boy.

Philip Young says that in The Old Man and the Sea Hemingway has narrowed the gap between himself and his code heroes so much that on one level this novel is wholly personal.

> The Old Man and the Sea is, from one angle, an account of Hemingway's personal struggle, grim, resolute and eternal, to write his best. With his seriousness, his precision and his perfectionism, Hemingway sees his craft exactly as Santiago sees his.[15]

The metaphor of fishing and the fisherman turns out to be very apt. Santiago is a craftsman who sets his lines more carefully than his colleagues, but he seems to have no luck any more. All the same, he feels it is best to be skillfully exact so that when luck does come he will be ready for it. He had once been called "The Champion" and had overcome many rivals in fair fights, and even though he seems to have no luck any more, he thinks ". . . I know many tricks and I have resolution." Hemingway, personally, had an almost superstitious respect for luck, and at the time he wrote The Old Man and the Sea (1952), his luck had not been good. He had published just one novel since For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), and it had been widely criticized. With his early works, he had been a kind of literary champion, but as with Santiago, the times he had proved his skill in the past meant nothing--"Now he was proving it again."

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[15] Ernest Hemingway, p. 98.

If, as Mr. Young says, this novel can be interpreted on a personal level, then perhaps the elements of nostalgia which have been discussed above can also be applied with significance to Hemingway himself. As we have seen earlier, Hemingway seemed to treasure past experiences and saved all kinds of mementos to remind himself of them, but he, like the old man, never allowed nostalgia to be a means of psychological escape. He tried to maintain a rigid work schedule right up to the time of his death, and even during the barren period of the forties when he seemed to have no luck he did not give up and try to live in a nostalgic world of past successes. It is easy to imagine Hemingway dreaming of Africa and lions, and, like the old man, finding great pleasure in it, because just as such dreams reminded the old man of his youth and strength, such dreams would remind Hemingway of his first African big-game hunting which he did when he was young and wealthy from his popular early novels. Memories had great value for Hemingway, but he seemed to realize that they must be kept in the proper perspective; they must never hinder him in his struggle to write well and be a "champion." This struggle seems to have been all important for Hemingway, and there are many who feel that he took his own life because his body had betrayed him;[16] he had become so physically incapacitated that work and the kind of active life he loved were no longer possible for him--memories were not reason enough for living.

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[16]See Leicester Hemingway, My Brother Ernest Hemingway, p. 256.

CHAPTER VI

THE MOVEABLE FEAST

The death of Ernest Hemingway was mourned widely and was considered a great loss to American letters. But fortunately, the Hemingway canon was not to end at his death. In the spring of 1964 a posthumous work appeared entitled A Moveable Feast, this title being taken from a letter to a friend in which Hemingway said: "If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast." This book is a series of vivid memoirs of the author's years in Paris from 1921 to 1926. Nostalgic, funny, tender, and sometimes savage, these reminiscences reveal much about Hemingway which did not show through in his stories and novels. Being personal recollection and his latest work, this book is a fitting basis for the concluding chapter of this study of the nostalgic in Hemingway.

Each chapter in A Moveable Feast is a brief independent reminiscent sketch. There is no direct continuity from one chapter to the next, though there is a sense of chronological order, but taken together they form a unified emotional collage of how Hemingway remembers Paris in the twenties. Even in this work, which is personal recollection of a time about which Hemingway held the tenderest of feelings, nostalgia is kept under rigid control and is never permitted to lapse into mere sentimentality. Hemingway never expresses explicitly his emotional attitude about those early years; he never says that they were wonderful

and happy and that he misses them. His recollections, actually, have a rather objective quality, but they are done in such a way that they have a subjective effect upon the reader. This is a characteristic Hemingway technique; an experience is portrayed objectively but with a realism which causes the reader to identify with the situation in such a way that he responds subjectively and almost involuntarily, in the manner which Hemingway intended. This is another example of Hemingway's notion that if a writer knows his subject well enough he may omit things and they will be supplied by the reader's imagination. Certainly Hemingway knew his subject well enough in this case, and as the preceding chapters of this thesis indicate, he also knew well the emotional responses which can be produced through nostalgia. The real level of emotional communication in this work is nostalgia, which as Mr. Morris says, "sings in the blood. . . and when all other things fail it joins men in a singular brotherhood." The very form of this book--the brief, loosely-connected vivid reminiscences--is suggestive of the way men experience nostalgic recollection.

In A Moveable Feast we find further evidence of the importance Hemingway placed on remembering, and we see again how the joy of remembering as he wrote constituted a great portion of the satisfaction he found in his professions. As he is sitting in a cafe on the Place St. Michel writing a story, Hemingway notices a beautiful girl walk in and sit down. He sees that she is obviously waiting for someone, "I've seen you, beauty, and you belong to me now, whoever you are waiting for and if I never see you again," he thinks. "You belong to me and Paris belongs to me and I belong to this notebook and this pencil."[1] It is easy to

[1]MF, p. 6.

imagine this mental snapshot tinged with a pleasant nostalgia, flashing before Hemingway's mind as he wrote of Brett Ashley in the cafes of Paris. Sometimes, when his writing was going well, Hemingway would be transported back into the scenes of his past about which he was writing. He describes such a sensation in the following way:

> Some days it went so well that you could make the country so that you could walk into it through the timber to come out into the clearing and work up onto the high ground and see the hills beyond the arm of the lake. A pencil lead might break off in the conical nose of the pencil sharpener and you would use the small blade of the pen knife to clear it or else sharpen the pencil carefully with the sharp blade and then slip your arm through the sweat-salted leather of your pack strap to lift the pack again, get the other arm through and feel the weight settle on your back and feel the pine needles under your moccasins as you started down for the lake.[2]

This particular reference is apparently to the writing of "Big Two-Hearted River," but it is a glimpse of the nostalgic pleasure Hemingway must have experienced in writing all of his stories set in the fragrant hemlock forests of northern Michigan.

In the discussion of the bitter-sweet feelings of nostalgia in this thesis, the emphasis has been upon the sweet aspect. This has been a deliberate emphasis, because for Hemingway, the sweet is the aspect which dominates. He enjoyed an active life packed with the kinds of exciting experiences which he sought, and he tried to prolong and preserve pleasurable and valuable experiences by remembering them, as he perhaps would have said, "accurately and well." But this is not to say that he was unacquainted with the bitter aspect of nostalgia--the pangs that come in realizing that the past is irrecoverable. In A Moveable Feast he has made some very perceptive comments about nostalgia which reveal his awareness of the emptiness and yearning which is often a part of it. During

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[2] MF, p. 91.

the early Paris years, Hemingway frequented the race tracks and was a systematic better, but he finally stopped because it took too much time and he was becoming too involved.

> When I stopped working on the races I was glad but it left an emptiness. By then I knew that everything good and bad left and emptiness when it stopped. But if it was bad, the emptiness filled up by itself. If it was good you could only fill it by finding something better.[3]

There is much psychological truth in this comment, for as our experiences slip away into the past they do leave a space that must be filled. Our psychic processes automatically try to cover over the spaces left by bad experiences but the spaces left by the good must be filled by new experience in the present. The yearning of nostalgia is the emptiness left by the good things, and the only healthy way to deal with it is to face honestly the present.

At another point in this book, nostalgia is described as hunger. As Hemingway and his wife walk across a bridge in Paris on a spring evening, they begin to reminisce about another spring when, with a friend named Chink, they had walked down the Italian side of the St. Bernard to Aosta. After they have reminded each other of all that had been done and said and eaten at that time and they have lapsed into a bitter-sweet nostaltic mood, Hadley attempts to shake it off and says "We should live in this time now and have every minute of it." Her husband, who though he enjoys remembering the past never sacrifices the present for it, replies, "We're watching the water now as it hits this buttress. Look what we can see when we look up the river." When they are across the bridge and on the other side of the river, they decide they are hungry

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[3]MF, p. 62.

and will go to Michaud's to eat. As they reach the restaurant, Hemingway writes, "Standing there I wondered how much of what we had felt on the bridge was just hunger. I asked my wife and she said, 'I don't know, Tatie. There are so many sorts of hunger. In the spring there are more. But that's gone now. Memory is hunger.'"[4] There is a paradoxical quality about nostalgia. It is at the same time an emptiness and a fullness, a yearning and a fulfillment. Hemingway captures this paradox in this book, where we find side by side the notions that "memory is hunger," and memory is "a moveable feast."

The letter from which the title of this book was taken was written in 1950. Apparently, Hemingway was fond of the phrase " a moveable feast" about that time because it appears twice in Across the River and Into the Trees which was published that same year.[5] In one of the places it appears in that novel, it is used to make the sentence "Happiness, as you know, is a movable [sic] feast." When we combine this statement with the one "Paris is a moveable feast," we see that what Hemingway was getting at was that pleasant memories provide a kind of feast, or, in other words, nostalgia is a moveable feast. This feast provided Hemingway with much nourishment as a creative artist. Nostalgia influenced him in the choice of subjects about which he wrote, it influenced him in the way he wanted to treat those subjects, and it even became a tool to aid him in carrying out his desires. This is not to say that nostalgia is the key which unlocks the meaning of Hemingway's fiction, for it is not, of course; but it is something which should not be overlooked in the search for such a key.

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[4] MF, pp. 53-7.

[5] ARIT, pp. 68, 273.

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